

**Example of best practices and available tools
for the use of indigenous and traditional knowledge and practices for adaptation¹**

Inputs provided by:

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD)

IFAD's goal is to empower poor rural women and men in developing countries to achieve higher incomes and improved food security.

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Title of practice/tool

Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF)

Description of practice/tool

The IPAF was designed as an innovative financial approach that would enable building direct partnerships among indigenous peoples' communities, grass-roots organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working with indigenous peoples in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The IPAF also serves as a listening and learning instrument, which is useful in determining indigenous peoples' needs, proposed solutions and innovations. As a community-driven fund, it is able to scout for innovations and pilot projects that could open the way for larger projects. It also has the potential to become a partner in strengthening indigenous peoples' intercultural dialogue on national, regional and global policies that directly and indirectly affect them.

The IPAF's main objective is to select and finance microprojects. Projects are referred to as "microprojects", inasmuch as applicable grants cannot exceed USD 30 000 (most have budgets ranging from USD 10 000 to USD 30 000) and the projects cannot run for more than one year.

One thing that differentiates all of these microprojects from other initiatives is the fact that they were conceived on the basis of a demand expressed directly or indirectly by the final beneficiaries and that the degree of ownership by the beneficiaries and the implementing organizations has been very effective. Some distinctive cross-sectoral issues in many of these microprojects set them apart from many other initiatives (i.e. livelihoods, land and territories, gender, local traditional knowledge and identity and culture).

In August 2008 and January 2009, IFAD organized two exchanges among the representatives of indigenous peoples in charge of the microprojects, the members of organizations supporting indigenous peoples and IFAD. The discussions at these exchanges raised some important points to be considered when establishing any technical and financial cooperation with indigenous peoples.

The lessons learned from these projects show that indigenous peoples have a holistic perspective: their proposals address various issues which are generally broad and inclusive. For example, projects that promote livelihood opportunities, economic growth and food security also endeavor to protect

¹ Please use this template for providing inputs related with one example. If you have more than one example, please provide them in separate files using this template.

biodiversity, natural resources, traditional cultures and indigenous rights, and aim to allow inclusion in society and participation in decision-making processes. Proposals that stress the loss of traditional livelihood systems and techniques plan their revitalization (sometimes through the use of indigenous plants, seeds and species) and integration with the development of alternative means and mechanisms to adapt to climate change.

Region

- *Africa*
- *Asia-Pacific*
- *Latin-America*

Country

Examples of projects dealing with climate adaptation:

In **Ecuador**, the microproject “ÑUKANCHIK KAUSAY, Our Life”, promoted by the Federation of Kichwa Peoples of the Sierra Norte of Ecuador, Chijalta, Fici, Chinchaysuyu Jatun Ayllu Llaktakunapak Tantariy, supported the processes for empowering indigenous organizations; it formed local technical teams from the Kichwa (or Quechua) groups of the Sierra Norte so that they could autonomously manage their territory and sustainably manage the local natural resources. The microproject also dealt with climate-related problems by developing an inventory of water resources.

In the **Solomon Islands in Melanesia**, a microproject was implemented with the Babanakira and Kolina communities, under the title “Increasing Community Resilience to Natural Disasters through the Use of Traditional Coping Strategies on the Weather Coast Guadalcanal Communities in the Solomon Islands”. In the past, the Solomon Islands have suffered a large number of natural and man-made disasters. The most recent of these was the April 2007 tsunami, which hit the western part of the country, causing the loss of many human lives and the destruction of livelihoods, and leaving a large number of people homeless. Moreover, between 1999 and 2003, these islands were the scene of violent conflict, which also had devastating effects on the population. Babanakira is the collective name for a series of villages located in Guadalcanal Province and accessible only by sea. The region has major climatic variations which tend to affect crops, and is suffering particularly from the effects of climate change – a process that could get worse in the near future. The project was designed and implemented by the NGO Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) to increase the resilience of the Babanakira and Kolina communities so that they could respond better to the impact of disasters.

To this end, the organization decided to promote the recording of traditional knowledge and practices concerning prevention measures and response mechanisms to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, and to promote their integration into local contingency plans. The participatory rural appraisal method was applied in 11 communities in Guadalcanal Province to record a set of practices and customs concerning both prevention and proactive response mechanisms. The idea was to revitalize traditional practices and combine them with global scientific and technical

knowledge so as to increase the possibilities of coping with these events in a sustainable manner and at a low cost, thereby mitigating the associated risks. The organization decided to involve the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) in the first stage of the project, which allowed participation in meetings on national contingency plans.

The results achieved include: the compilation of preliminary information on traditional response mechanisms; the recording of village-level background information that could be used by the NDMO; the transmission to villagers of information produced by this institution regarding these issues; and the production by the villagers, with guidance from SIDT instructors, of a draft manual incorporating traditional prevention and proactive response knowledge and practices to cope with natural and man-made disasters. A video was also produced, recording the work carried out by the communities. The various lessons learned indicate that men's and women's knowledge plays an important and complementary role during disasters. While the communities recognize the importance of modern technology in alerting the population to disasters, they also say that when the communication bridge with the outside world is broken, all they can rely on is their traditional knowledge in order to survive. Another important result of this project concerns the transfer of knowledge from elders to the young, who were very pleased to learn that their traditional knowledge could save their lives; this also increased self-esteem and group cohesion.

Sector

- *Food security, agriculture and fisheries*
- *Forestry*
- *Marine and coastal ecosystems*
- *Mountains*
- *Other terrestrial ecosystems*
- *Water resources*

Name of implementing institution/s

The IPAF as financial approach is managed by IFAD, while the specific microprojects are managed by local organisations, such as:

- In Bolivia, the Aymara Centre of Multidisciplinary Studies manages the microproject "Strengthening Indigenous Organizations for Climate Change Adaption through Water"
- In India, the Center for Development Action (CDA) implements the microproject Building the Capacity of Indigenous Peoples to Cope, Adapt or Mitigate the Effects of Climate Change on Their Livelihoods and Environments
- In Ecuador, the Federation of Kichwa Peoples of the Sierra Norte of Ecuador manages the microproject "ÑUKANCHIK KAUSAY, Our Life"
- In the Solomon Islands in Melanesia, the NGO Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) manages the microproject "Increasing Community Resilience to Natural Disasters through the Use of Traditional Coping Strategies on the Weather Coast Guadalcanal Communities in the

Solomon Islands”.

Further information

IPAF <http://www.ifad.org/english/indigenous/grants/index.htm>

More detailed information on projects addressing adaptation to climate change are available in the IPAF Small Projects Desk Review:

http://www.ifad.org/english/indigenous/grants/projects/desk_review.pdf

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