



**Regional Centre for
Mapping of Resources
for Development**

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES PLAN

Issue No. 1 2022

**REGIONAL CENTER FOR MAPPING OF RESOURCES FOR
DEVELOPMENT**

Acknowledgement

The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) expresses its sincere appreciation to all institutions, experts, and stakeholders who contributed to the development of this Indigenous Peoples Plan. The preparation of this document reflects a collaborative effort aimed at strengthening inclusive environmental governance and ensuring that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are meaningfully engaged in initiatives supported by RCMRD.

RCMRD acknowledges the valuable guidance and contributions provided by its member states, development partners, research institutions, and civil society organizations whose insights have helped shape this framework. Their expertise and commitment to sustainable development, social inclusion, and environmental stewardship have been instrumental in ensuring that this plan aligns with international safeguards standards and best practices.

Special appreciation is extended to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities across the region whose knowledge systems, cultural practices, and stewardship of natural resources continue to play a critical role in biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable land management. Their participation and perspectives are essential in guiding responsible geospatial data use, environmental monitoring, and participatory mapping initiatives.

RCMRD also recognizes the contributions of regional and global partners including initiatives under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international frameworks that promote the recognition of Indigenous knowledge, gender-responsive environmental governance, and inclusive participation in biodiversity conservation.

Finally, RCMRD acknowledges the dedication of its staff and technical teams whose expertise in geospatial technologies, Earth Observation, and stakeholder engagement has supported the development of this Indigenous Peoples Plan. Their continued commitment will ensure that RCMRD programs respect Indigenous rights, strengthen community participation, and promote sustainable development across the region.

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Introduction

The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) promotes sustainable development in Eastern and Southern Africa through geospatial technologies, Earth Observation (EO), spatial data infrastructure, and environmental monitoring systems. Many RCMRD-supported initiatives—including biodiversity mapping, climate monitoring, land use assessments, and ecosystem management—take place in landscapes inhabited or used by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs).

Indigenous communities play a critical role in environmental stewardship and possess extensive traditional ecological knowledge that contributes to biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, and climate resilience. Recognizing this, RCMRD is committed to ensuring that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are meaningfully involved in the design and implementation of activities that affect their lands, territories, resources, and livelihoods.

RCMRD also recognizes that digital technologies, geospatial platforms, and emerging AI-enabled tools can create both opportunities and risks for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. Where such tools are used in mapping, environmental monitoring, data

collection, or information disclosure, RCMRD will ensure that communication and participation processes remain linguistically inclusive, culturally appropriate, and accessible to communities with low literacy or limited digital connectivity.

This Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) establishes a framework to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are meaningfully engaged in RCMRD-supported activities and that their rights, knowledge systems, and livelihoods are respected and protected.

The Plan aligns with internationally recognized safeguards frameworks, including:

- Environmental and Social Safeguards of the Green Climate Fund
- Environmental and Social Framework of the World Bank
- Integrated Safeguards System of the African Development Bank

Objectives of the Indigenous Peoples Plan

The objectives of the IPP are to:

- a) Ensure the meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in RCMRD projects and programs
- b) Promote respect for Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural heritage
- c) Prevent or mitigate potential adverse impacts on Indigenous communities
- d) Support equitable access to project benefits
- e) Strengthen Indigenous participation in environmental monitoring and geospatial data initiatives.
- f) Promote linguistically and culturally inclusive communication and engagement approaches in all activities involving Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.
- g) Ensure that digital, geospatial, and AI-enabled tools used in RCMRD-supported activities do not exclude, misrepresent, or disadvantage Indigenous communities.
- h) Strengthen safeguards for Indigenous data, knowledge systems, and community consent in the use of digital platforms and automated analytical systems.

Policy and Legal Framework

The IPP is guided by international frameworks that promote Indigenous rights and inclusive environmental governance.

Key frameworks include:

- a) The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

- b) The Convention on Biological Diversity, which recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge in biodiversity conservation
- c) The Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which emphasizes the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in biodiversity governance.

These frameworks highlight the importance of inclusive participation, respect for traditional knowledge, and recognition of community stewardship of natural resources.

Indigenous Peoples in RCMRD Member States

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are present in many RCMRD member states, particularly in areas characterized by:

- a) Pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods
- b) Forest ecosystems
- c) Dryland and rangeland landscapes
- d) Coastal and marine environments
- e) Protected areas

These communities often rely on natural resources for livelihoods and maintain cultural practices closely linked to ecosystems and biodiversity.

Potential Impacts of RCMRD Activities on Indigenous Peoples

RCMRD activities may interact with Indigenous communities through:

- a) Participatory mapping and land use mapping initiatives
- b) Environmental monitoring programs
- c) Biodiversity and ecosystem assessments
- d) Climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction programs
- e) Geospatial data platforms and digital tools.

Potential risks may include:

- a) Misrepresentation of Indigenous land use patterns
- b) Disclosure of sensitive cultural or environmental sites through mapping
- c) Exclusion of Indigenous communities from decision-making processes.
- d) Exclusion of Indigenous communities from project information or consultations due to language, literacy, or digital access barriers
- e) Misuse, extraction, or unauthorized reuse of Indigenous knowledge through digital systems or automated tools

- f) Bias or misrepresentation in AI-enabled or geospatial analysis affecting Indigenous territories, land use, or cultural sites
- g) Disclosure of sensitive community information through digital platforms without adequate consent or safeguards.

The IPP therefore establishes measures to ensure that these risks are minimized.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

Where RCMRD activities directly affect Indigenous Peoples or their lands, territories, or resources, the institution will promote engagement processes consistent with the principle of **Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)**.

FPIC requires that Indigenous communities:

- a) Receive timely, understandable, and culturally appropriate information about proposed activities
- b) Have sufficient time to review and consider proposed activities
- c) Participate freely in consultations without coercion, intimidation, or manipulation
- d) Have the opportunity to approve or reject proposed activities affecting their lands, territories, resources, or livelihoods

To support meaningful participation, FPIC processes will ensure that information is shared in accessible and culturally appropriate formats, including:

- a) Use of locally appropriate languages
- b) Culturally relevant visual materials such as maps, diagrams, or illustrations
- c) Interpreters or local facilitators where necessary
- d) Oral or voice-based communication methods for communities with low literacy or limited access to written information.

Indigenous Peoples Engagement Strategy

RCMRD will adopt participatory engagement approaches to ensure Indigenous communities are involved in project design and implementation.

Engagement methods may include:

- a) International/ Regional Community consultations
- b) Community consultations in locally appropriate languages
- c) Participatory mapping exercises

- d) Focus group discussions
- e) Local stakeholder workshops
- f) Participatory action research
- g) Collaboration with Indigenous organizations, elders, and community leaders
- h) Indigenous Navigator tools
- i) Use of interpreters, local facilitators, visual materials, and oral or voice-based communication methods where needed to ensure meaningful participation of low-literacy and linguistically diverse groups.

These approaches ensure that Indigenous knowledge contributes to geospatial data and environmental monitoring initiatives.

Indigenous Knowledge and Data Governance

RCMRD recognizes the value of Indigenous knowledge systems in environmental monitoring, sustainable land management, and biodiversity governance.

Measures will be implemented to ensure that Indigenous knowledge is documented stored, analyzed, and shared only with community consent and in ways that respect Indigenous data sovereignty.

Where digital systems or AI-enabled analytical tools are used, RCMRD will ensure that:

- a) Indigenous knowledge is not incorporated into automated systems without informed community consent
- b) Sensitive cultural, ecological, and territorial information is protected from unauthorized disclosure or reuse
- c) Communities are informed about how digital tools, databases, or analytical systems may use, store, or process their information
- d) Safeguards are in place to prevent bias, extraction, misrepresentation, or harmful secondary use of Indigenous data

Gender and Indigenous Peoples

RCMRD recognizes that Indigenous women play critical roles in environmental stewardship, food systems, biodiversity conservation, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. The Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) will therefore promote the meaningful participation of Indigenous women in consultations, decision-making, and community engagement processes through gender-responsive and culturally appropriate approaches. These approaches will take into account intersecting barriers that may affect participation, including age, literacy, language, disability, remoteness, and digital exclusion.

To support inclusive participation, the IPP will ensure that:

- a) Indigenous women actively participate in consultations, decision-making processes, and project-related activities affecting their communities

- b) Gender-responsive approaches are integrated into community engagement and participatory planning processes
- c) Collaboration with relevant networks and initiatives, such as the CBD Women's Caucus, supports inclusive participation of Indigenous women in biodiversity governance and environmental decision-making.

Grievance Redress Mechanism

Indigenous Peoples will have access to the RCMRD Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) to raise concerns or complaints related to project activities.

The GRM will:

- a) Provide accessible and transparent channels for submitting complaints
- b) Allow complaints to be submitted through community structures, traditional leadership systems, or other locally appropriate mechanisms
- c) Ensure culturally appropriate and timely grievance resolution processes
- d) Protect complainants from retaliation, intimidation, or discrimination

The GRM will also receive and address complaints related to language barriers, exclusion from digitally mediated engagement processes, misuse of Indigenous knowledge or community data, and harmful disclosure of sensitive information through geospatial platforms or automated systems. Complaints may be submitted through oral channels, community representatives, or other culturally appropriate mechanisms to ensure accessibility for communities with low literacy or limited digital access.

Monitoring and Reporting

RCMRD will monitor implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Plan through the following indicators. Monitoring results will be included in project reports and safeguards monitoring systems.

Indicator	Means of Verification
Indigenous participation in consultations	Consultation reports, meeting minutes, attendance registers
Indigenous representation in project activities	Attendance records, participant lists disaggregated by gender, age, and community group

Grievances submitted by Indigenous communities	Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) records, grievance logs, resolution reports
Incorporation of Indigenous knowledge in project activities	Project documentation, technical reports, and consultation records
Number of consultations conducted in locally appropriate languages	Consultation reports, meeting minutes, attendance registers, translated consultation materials
Use of interpreters, visual materials, or oral/voice-based communication methods	Consultation documentation, facilitation reports, training materials, photographs, audio/visual records
Participation of Indigenous women, youth, elders, and linguistically marginalized groups	Disaggregated participant lists, consultation reports, stakeholder engagement records
Grievances related to digital exclusion, language barriers, or misuse of Indigenous data	GRM records, grievance logs, investigation and resolution reports
Evidence that digital or AI-enabled tools operate transparently and without exclusionary effects	Project monitoring reports, system documentation, safeguards compliance reviews, stakeholder feedback
Documentation of community consent for collection, storage, and use of Indigenous knowledge in digital systems	FPIC documentation, consent forms, community agreements, data governance records

Institutional Responsibilities

Safeguards Focus person (Gender and IPLC Specialist)

Responsible for ensuring that Indigenous Peoples considerations are integrated into project safeguards processes.

Project Managers

Responsible for implementing engagement activities and ensuring compliance with the IPP.

National Partners and Implementing Agencies

Support consultations and engagement with Indigenous communities.

Conclusion

The Indigenous Peoples Plan provides a framework for ensuring that RCMRD projects respect the rights, knowledge, and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. Through inclusive stakeholder engagement, participatory mapping approaches, and responsible geospatial data practices, RCMRD seeks to strengthen collaboration with Indigenous communities and support sustainable environmental governance across its member states.

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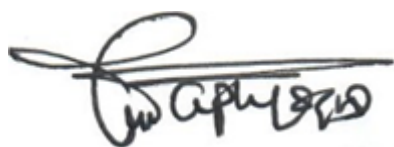
EFFECTIVE DATE

This Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy shall come into effect upon approval and signature by the Director General of RCMRD.

Approved by:

Name: Dr. Emmanuel Nkurunziza

Title: Director General



Signature:

Date: 26th March 2026

ANNEX

FPIC Checklist

This document provides sample entries demonstrating how the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Checklist can be completed when engaging Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in RCMRD-supported projects such as participatory mapping, biodiversity monitoring, or climate adaptation programs.

Participatory Mapping Project – Pastoral Community

Checklist Item	Response
Indigenous communities identified and mapped	
Information shared in local language and culturally appropriate format	

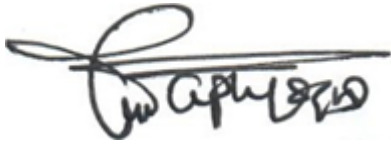
Community meetings held with traditional leaders and representatives	.
Women, youth, and vulnerable groups participated in consultations	.
Adequate time provided for community deliberation	
Community decision documented	.
Consent or concerns recorded	.
Follow-up engagement planned	.
Interpreters or local facilitators used where necessary	
Visual, oral, or voice-based communication methods used for low-literacy groups	
Community informed about digital storage, mapping, or automated processing of their data	
Consent obtained for use of Indigenous knowledge in digital platforms or analytical systems	
Sensitive cultural and ecological information protected from unauthorized disclosure.	

Biodiversity Monitoring Project – Forest Community

Checklist Item	Response
Indigenous communities identified and mapped	.
Information shared in local language and culturally appropriate format	.
Community meetings held with traditional leaders and representatives	.
Women, youth, and vulnerable groups participated in consultations	
Adequate time provided for community deliberation	
Community decision documented	
Consent or concerns recorded	Community requested data-sharing agreement for ecological information.
Follow-up engagement planned	RCMRD to support community training in biodiversity monitoring.

Name: Dr. Emmanuel Nkurunziza

Title: Director General

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized initial 'P' followed by the name 'Kaplan' and a date '2022'.

Signature:

Date: 26th March 2022