



FORA

FOUNDATION FOR FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS AND
RESTORATIVE ACTION

From **Vision**
to **Foundations**

Getting finance to
smallholder farmers' organisations and
Indigenous Peoples

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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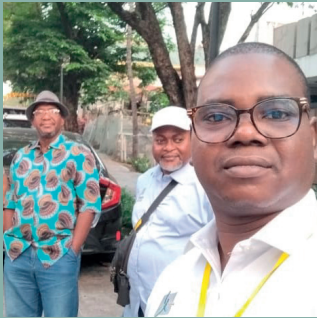


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From Vision
to Foundations



Thank you for
your trust!



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FOREWORD

After decades of work with local groups, several farmers and Indigenous leaders encouraged us to set up a philanthropic structure dedicated to their grassroots organisations. We listened, and created FFORA.

This report is an opportunity to reflect on FFORA's progress to date: from the initial vision to its structural set up as a fund under the hosting of the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation in November 2024.

Right from our inception, we have supported farmers' organisations, representing over 95 million smallholders, in coming together for a common political agenda.

We are also very pleased to be supporting the Global Alliance for Territorial Communities, representing 35 million people living in forest territories on their mission to strengthen Indigenous economies, advancing the idea of an Indigenous-led trade platform.

In addition, we are supporting local organisations to deliver on the ground actions to promote under-utilised species.

The last 18 months are a confirmation that the vision and trust of farmers and Indigenous leaders for us to set up FFORA is more relevant than ever, filling a gap in the slow progress towards real localisation.

This report will help you understand what FFORA is trying to achieve but most importantly why Indigenous territorial authorities and farmers' organisations should be recognised as central actors of climate resilience, biodiversity protection and prosperity.

Pauline BUFFLE and Chris BUSS
FFORA Co-founders

INTRODUCTION

FFORA was established to support both Indigenous territorial authorities and smallholder farmers' organisation. Trusted by these groups, the structure has been co-designed to be responsive to their needs, especially to change existing funding modalities. Whilst some public, philanthropic and private finance mechanisms have recognised the need to shift the model more directly to locally owned and managed organisations ("the localisation agenda"), the pace remains frustratingly slow.

FFORA has been developed as a short-term mechanism to facilitate and broker finance flows directly to farmers and Indigenous organisations – with a vision of a 10-year organisational life span. Managed by a lean team, its vision is to build capacity in Indigenous and farmers' organisations by working directly with their staff.

Set up to promote the innovation of Indigenous and smallholder farmers and open opportunities, FFORA

envisions that the local Indigenous and farmers structures will be strong enough, or finally recognised as such, to change the current paradigm. The aim is that reimagined finance, tailored to local organisations' needs, actually reaches them. This will enable farmers and Indigenous Peoples to own and manage their mechanisms to support their networks to build, or strengthen, just and biodiverse forests and farming systems.

FFORA is fighting for local funding based on trust, equal partnerships and anchored in local realities. Current support systems need to change so local people are in the 'driving seat' of any project, business or investment planned to benefit them. Moving away from an end beneficiary status, Indigenous Peoples and smallholder farmers must have an equitable and leading role in fair and transparent decision-making processes.

HIGHLIGHTS

Redesigning finance flows

One of FFORA's achievements has been its support to nine regional and two international farmers' organisations in enhancing their coherency and solidarity to develop their **Family Farmers for Climate Action campaign**. Regular coordination and the convening of two international farmer-led meetings has enabled smallholder farmers' organisations to raise their profiles and influence policy even more strongly.

Investment readiness

- With FFORA's support, farmers' organisations have developed their initial vision of a **Famers Empowerment and Resiliency Fund**. This umbrella fund can be a game-changing solution to a decade-old problem of finance failing to reach those who need it most.
- FFORA organised the first ever **London Indigenous Business Week** helping Indigenous economic leaders from across the globe to confirm their vision and build connections to develop a truly Indigenous-led global trade facility.
- In Cambodia, FFORA has funded the **Asian Farmers Association** to support local seeds producers to enhance their financial, technical and infrastructural capacities to increase production and use of traditional rice seeds.



Co Creation Group



FFORA has the privilege of being co-created with a group of experts from different backgrounds.

Elizabeth
NSIMADALA

Elizabeth is a young Ugandan agripreneur and smallholder farmer. She is the President of the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF).



Esther
PENUNIA

Esther has decades of experience in rural development and is based in the Philippines. She is the Secretary General of the Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA).



Ibrahima
COULIBALY

Ibrahima is a Malian farmer leader, President of the Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA) and the Vice President of the Panafrican Farmers Organisation.



Juan Carlos
JINTIACH

Juan Carlos is a member of the Shuar People of the Ecuadorian Amazon. He is the Executive Secretary Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC).



Maddi
ROGERSON

Maddi is an expert in international relations and spent seven years in the UK Civil Service. She is a special adviser to the Bezos Earth Fund.

Steering Committee

FFORA is governed by a steering committee that oversees fiduciary compliance and alignment of FFORA's workplans in achieving its missions. The committee plays a key role in the relationship between FFORA and its fiscal host, the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation.



Erin
FITZGERALD

Erin runs her own consultancy having been CEO of the US Farmers and Ranchers in Action, with over 20 years of experience at the forefront of sustainability and climate-smart agriculture.



Charles
KARANGWA

Charles is Global Head of IUCN's Nature-Based Solutions hub, with over two decades of experience translating climate policy and ecosystem restoration into impactful, scalable investment strategies.



Indigenous producer in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

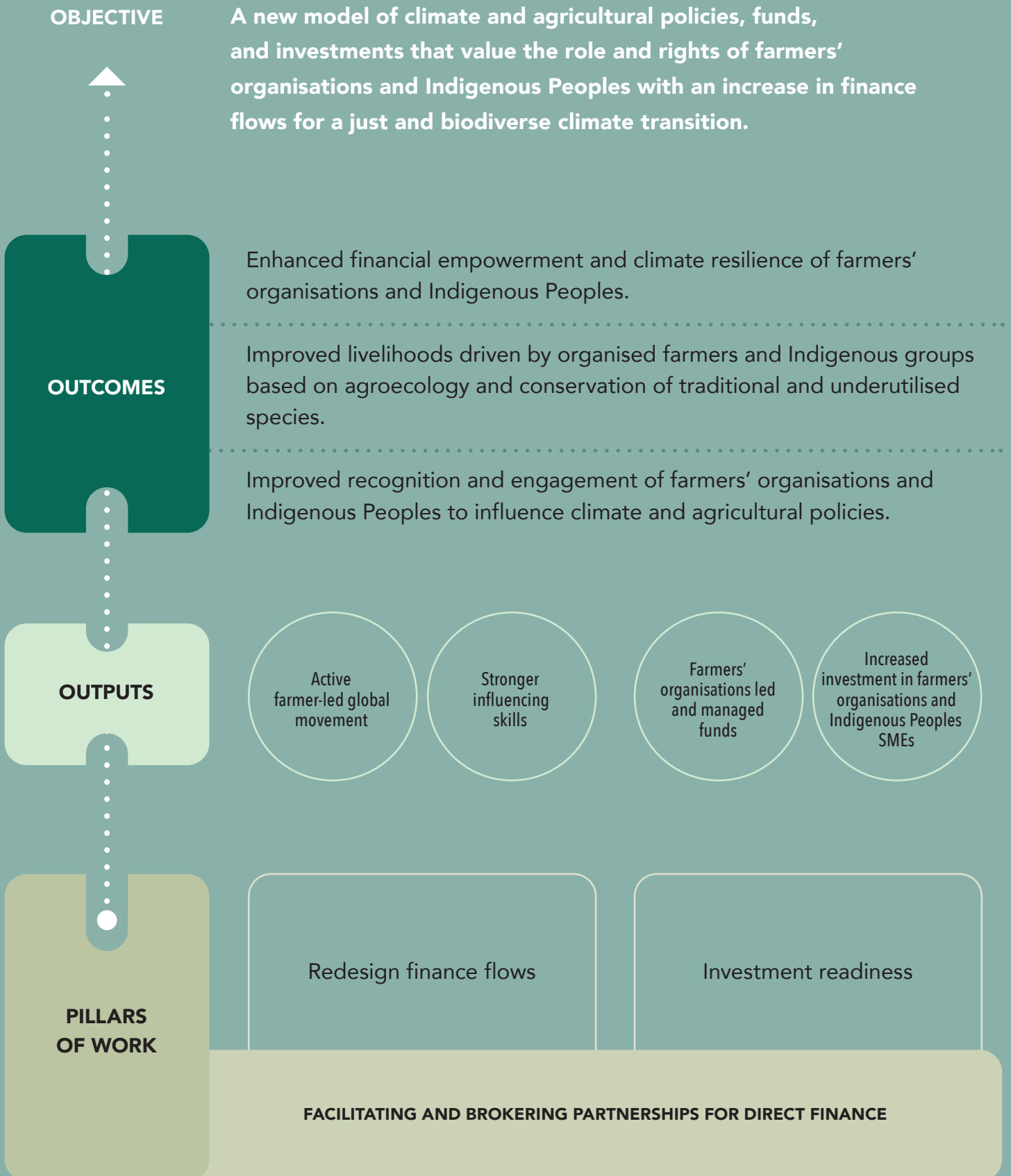
FFORA's Theory of change

As little as **0.3% of current climate finance** reaches smallholders, local communities, and Indigenous Peoples although they depend on, and are guardians of, forest and farm landscapes whilst being exposed to climate extremes.

This lack of investment is a consequence of barriers that hinder farmers' organisations (FOs) access to public and private climate finance.

	Main barriers to climate finance	FFORA's support to respond to farmers and Indigenous Peoples demands
Mainstream sustainability models	Sustainability models are based on current economic systems but are not fundamentally shifting the model to be farmer driven.	Policy influence for an enabling and farmer driven political, legal and economic environment.
The risk myth	Investors perceive finance to farmers as risky, with complex markets.	Strategic communication and research to counter the risk myth.
Capacity gaps of farmers organisation	Farmers' organisations lack some skills in development of bankable projects.	Enhanced capacities to access existing finance and develop their own climate funds or develop bankable projects.
Resilient and biodiverse systems	Heavy focus on specific timber and a few commodities ignoring more biodiverse & resilient systems and products.	Investment in resilient and biodiverse farming systems with associated markets.
Matching funds to capacity	Much of the available finance is not tailored to the on-the-ground realities of FOs financial and management capacity.	Agile and direct finance that responds to their needs and capacities.

FFORA's Theory of change



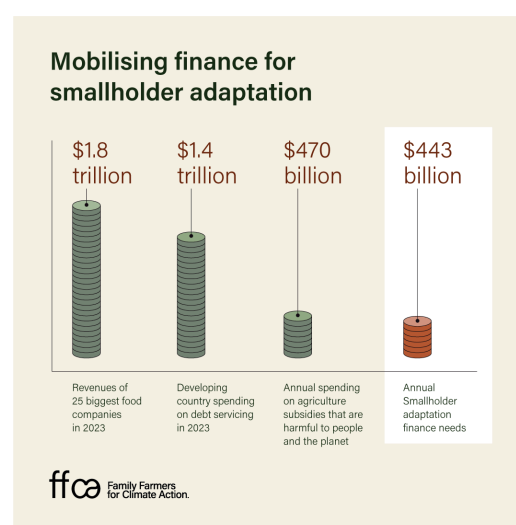
REDESIGNING FINANCE FLOWS

Strategic communication and policy influencing

Family Farmer for Climate Action campaign

Voices of smallholder farmers are often marginalised and tend to disappear behind industrial agriculture lobbies both at national and international level. In addition, the scale of their contribution to food and fibre production is often overlooked while they are wrongly considered as risky investments. FFORA has been supporting from its inception the [Family Farmers for Climate Action \(FFCA\)](#), a farmer-led campaign composed of nine regional and two global family farmers' organisations (see map on pp. 24-25) looking at countering these trends.

Family Farmers for Climate Action campaign provides the farmers' organisations with knowledge, tools and strategic communications to help them realise their ask for more and better



finance to family farmers' organisations. The campaign asks include stronger representation and engagement in decision making for finance mechanisms



Research

FFORA has been involved in various pieces of research developed to underpin the campaign and raise awareness on the importance of smallholder farmers' organisations.

Before UNFCCC COP30, research included [Untapped Potential – An analysis of international public climate finance flows to sustainable agriculture and family farmers](#), and [Money well spent? Why the world's biggest climate funds are failing to get finance to the grassroots where it matters most.](#)

Then for the last UN climate conference, FFORA also provided support to the third publication by Climate Focus "[Feeding the World in a Changing Climate](#)".

The latter provides scientific evidence of the importance of smallholder farmers for adaptation to climate change and the need to invest in them.



© FFCA

Representatives of the 11 farmers' organisations with supporters at the FORCE 2.0 meeting.

at national, regional and international level. The campaign is also supporting the farmers' organisations in garnering support for the development of a Farmers Resiliency and Empowerment Fund.

FFORA actively coordinates the FFCA with external technical support for story

gathering, media engagement and media training. Specific inputs have been provided around meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the G7, especially the Apulia Initiative for food security in Africa, the G20 and many more.

Farmers' Organisations Recognition Capacity and Engagement (FORCE)

(1) Funded by ClimateWorks Foundation.

Key milestones for FFORA and farmers' organisations were the two farmer-led FORCE meetings, respectively hosted by the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation in 2025 (FORCE 1.0)¹ and the Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Development early 2026 (FORCE 2.0)², with and for farmers' organisations from around the world.

(2) Funded by Robert Bosch Stiftung, Porticus Foundation, GIZ, Climate Emergency Collaboration Group.

In both instances, the agenda was developed with FFORA's co-creation group and other farmers' organisations leaders and focused on furthering the Family Farmers for Climate Action campaign and priorities for shaping farmer friendly climate finance.

The meetings led to a common agenda and action plan between the farmers' organisations for policy influencing around three ambitions:

1. At national level, they are looking at securing and increasing national budgets for agriculture and food systems transformation directly to family farmers organisations.

2. At the global level, their ambition is to have a seat at all relevant policy and financial platforms whilst calling for a reform of existing "climate" funds to ensure finance reaches smallholders directly.

3. Finally, the ambition of the farmers' organisations is to develop an umbrella mechanism, the Farmers Resiliency and Empowerment Fund.



Reflections on farmer-led meeting...



Many leaders appreciated that smallholder farmers' organisations were enabled to come together, strategise and plan amongst themselves - as farmers' organisations, not with NGOs, other CSO's nor governments. **These meetings are powerful moments to strengthen solidarity and coherency for a common agenda on climate finance.**

In addition, facilitation of constructive dialogues between farmer leaders and philanthropic organisations, as well as with multilateral funders such as the World Bank developed, or strengthened, a sense of trust and collaboration.

These were very positive steps in building strong partnerships to enhance recognition and engagement of farmers' organisations and their members in financial and political mechanisms. This shows that farmers' organisations have the capacity to be equal partners when given the right preparation, empowerment and platforms for dialogue.

“This is the first time that major regional farmers' organisations around the globe came together to agree on our three ambitions to ensure climate finance reaches directly family farmers through our agency /organisations.”

—Esther Penunia, Secretary General
Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development



“The meeting was an opportunity to learn about the funding modalities but we were also able to express our frustrations on the hurdles posed in accessing finance in the existing funding architecture (...), we made proposals outlining how we would want to see the financing structured and more importantly on the need to establish a dedicated fund for smallholder farmers tailored to addressing their needs and challenges for climate adaptation.”

—Stephen Muchiri, Executive Director
Eastern Africa Farmers Federation




“It is really exciting - rarely you hear in such an impactful and compelling way the united voice of family farmers which gets to the core issues. This group has clearly got immense power and influence to manage finance.”

—Steven Lang, Regenerative Finance Specialist

- ▶ After the meetings, farmers invited for the first time financial stakeholders and not the other way around. Financiers were hosted to explore opportunities, options, mechanisms, and strategies to enhance farmers' organisations access to climate finance.

For the inclusive dialogue in FORCE 1.0, farmers presented to a group of more than 25 finance stakeholders, ranging from multilateral finance organisations, bilateral funders, philanthropy, and the private sector. For their second meeting, farmers organised a webinar for which more than 130 participants registered. Both meetings have helped farmers' organisations and FFORA to strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones.

The outcomes of both meetings are used to frame FFORA's support to farmers' organisations within the campaign but also more broadly – with specific actions such as FFORA providing technical assistance to lead for the development of the fund that will be captured under a partnership agreement with farmers' organisations.



Raising the profile of farmers' organisations and Indigenous Peoples groups

FFORA and the Family Farmers for Climate Action campaign were mentioned in the "Transforming Food Systems for People, Nature, and Climate", a document led by philanthropic experts, as key work driving change in the food system arena. FFORA was recommended and recognised as one of the 25 current organisations that can help foundations deliver systems change through its work with smallholders' organisations and nature protection.

FFORA had the privilege to be invited by different platforms to either share insights with, or highlight the importance of, farmers' organisations and Indigenous Peoples groups.

- **Sharing insights on the importance of strategic communication and influencing strategies at:**

- The workshop entitled "Climate Funds – Opportunities and strategy for farmers' organisations access" organised by the Network of Peasant and Producers' Organizations in West Africa (ROPPA for its French acronym).
- The General Assembly of the Eastern and Southern Africa Farmers Federation.
- A webinar for the *I Grow Your Food* campaign organised by the International Network of Organic Farmers Organisations supported by IFOAM.

- **Highlighting the role of farmers' organisations and Indigenous Peoples groups**

- An interview for "Coffee Intelligence", an online publication on the most important topics in the coffee sector.
- Delivering a class online to the University of Notre Dame during "The Future of Farmland and Real Estate: National Security, Sustainability, and Investment Trends" seminar series.



Sonia Guajajara, Minister for Indigenous Peoples in Brazil, Lord Zac Goldsmith and Juan Carlos Jinitach, Executive Secretary of the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities during a meeting in London to discuss Indigenous trade.

© FFORA

FINANCE READINESS

Farmers empowerment and resiliency fund development

With 0.3% of climate finance getting to smallholder farmers and Indigenous Peoples, and multiple barriers to access it, smallholder farmers' and Indigenous organisations clearly need more funding.

As grassroots organisations they would be better placed to deliver fit-for-purpose funding directly on the ground. Inspired by the initiatives of Indigenous Peoples and their territorial funds, farmers' organisations, especially the Asian Farmers Association and the Eastern Africa Farmers Federations have been nurturing the idea of having a dedicated farmer fund for several years.

With FFORA's facilitation and technical support, they have brought in the other farmers' organisations, part of the FFCA campaign, in developing the idea. Their initial vision is to have a farmers' organisation-led umbrella mechanism; built around direct access finance initiated and managed by farmers' organisations.

Direct finance

Their institutional anchoring as well as their political and technical capacity will ensure the development of diversified and resilient food systems.

FFORA drafted a background paper which informed technical discussions shaping a more detailed concept. FFORA also invited the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB) to present the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (FTM) to farmers leaders.

Farmers defined a strategy and decided that their process will include interested key partners from governments, financial institutions, and development partners. However, the common agreement is that the setup of the umbrella mechanism stays farmer-led and farmer owned.

Farmers' organisations requested FFORA to take a facilitating and technical assistance lead helping align potential partners to the farmer-led process. At the same the time, the Family Farmers for Climate Action campaign will keep raising awareness of the value and role such a funding mechanism can play in delivering, on the ground, and locally owned, climate solutions.

In addition, the plan is to find support for two important milestones. First, farmers' organisations need to run consultations with their members to understand what the best fit-for-purpose fund would be. Then FFORA would organise a knowledge exchange with members of the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC) who have set up their own territorial funds and are willing to share learnings from their establishment.

Indigenous territorial authorities and farmers' organisations provide local leadership and represent diverse groups including women, and youth. Democratically managed, they are trusted by their members to deliver high quality fiduciary and technical services, that respond to farmers' and Indigenous Peoples' needs and guide meaningful action.

Earmarked funding, while helpful for funders to control more tightly and manage closely how their investment works, limits local organisations' ability to respond and adapt to their members' ever changing needs and priorities.

Shifting finance flows to these organisations, directly (and unrestrictedly) is a cost effective and efficient way of ensuring climate solutions are locally designed and developed by those who know best on-the-ground realities.

Providing direct finance provides the local agency, ownership, empowerment and deeply rooted organisational structures needed for a just transition to build biodiverse and climate resilient farming systems.



Farmer leaders of the Family Farmers for Climate Action visiting the Soro-Soro Ibaba Development Cooperative providing credit to smallholder farmers in Philippines.



Indigenous leaders and economic actors at the London Indigenous Business Week.

© FFORA

The Indigenous Trade Platform

The trade platform will be providing an enabling environment for Indigenous enterprises by:



Strengthening technical and organisational capacities

Organise peer exchanges on technical and administrative knowledge to generate greater capacities.



Connecting with niche markets

Facilitate access to special national and international markets to scale up economic opportunities.



Connecting with investors

Connect impact investors with Indigenous startups and mature initiatives with investment needs.



Advocating for adapted policies

Develop/support advocacy for policies adapted to the particular conditions of the Indigenous economy at the national and global levels.

Underpinned by a set of core principles (still under definition) of Indigenous economies:

- Grounded in land, culture, community, and traditional knowledge.
- Led by Indigenous organisations and bottom-up governance structures.
- Promoting regenerative investment, not extractive models.
- Embracing diverse, land-based products (e.g., cacao, textiles, renewable energy, ecotourism).
- Using appropriate, community-driven technology and infrastructure.
- Branding built through storytelling, language, and cultural identity.



Funded by Sol de Janeiro Foundation

Global Indigenous Facility for Trade

Much of current finance for forest territories is grant-based and focused on forest protection. However, the existing Indigenous economy needs to be better considered and strengthened as a way to enhance forest protection whilst building prosperity for the youth and future generations.

The Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (see map pp. 26-27) has officially endorsed the Indigenous economy as a new pillar of their work. Under this pillar, Indigenous leaders identified the need for a structure that could promote Indigenous-led enterprises. It would support the establishment of respectful policies, create investment opportunities, build market access and increase investments.

Indigenous leaders and Indigenous economic actors approached FFORA to



provide technical assistance and financial support to develop such structure. This platform would be an Indigenous Peoples-led mechanism designed to build local, national and global partnerships with businesses, investors and governments, to strengthen and scale up Indigenous Peoples rural enterprises while safeguarding forests.

Following a gathering of Indigenous economic leaders organised by the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities and Wiñak (supported by N4C and Region4) in Ecuador, FFORA convened a small group at London Climate Action Week, hosted by Lord Zac Goldsmith and joined by Sonia Guajajara, Minister for Indigenous Peoples in Brazil. The Minister confirmed that Indigenous economies are key for nature, climate and livelihoods. The Executive Secretary of GATC also reiterated his vision on the importance of putting Indigenous trade high on their agenda.

With the support of the Sol de Janeiro Foundation, FFORA was able to convene the first ever London Indigenous Business Week. It brought together Indigenous leaders and Indigenous-led enterprises such as Warisan Makmut Nusantara (Indonesia), Wiñak, Chakra Corporation (Ecuador), Amarcy (Peru), Tonibung (Malaysia), Tosepan (Mexico), and GATC with market, philanthropic and governmental allies for a week of learning, exchange, and partnership-building.

They discussed specificities of Indigenous economies and started to discuss what the trade platform could potentially look like. The Indigenous leaders also touched upon the type of partnerships they were looking for, the promising supply chains and the type of businesses they were willing to engage with.

Reflections on Indigenous trade...

The value and unique point of difference that the development of this Indigenous trade facility presents, compared to other initiatives on the Indigenous economy, is the listening, sharing and building together as key principles to ensure that it is **built from the ground-up, and led by Indigenous economic organisations themselves.**

• • • •

“Too often these conversations do not include us. Here [in London], we are setting our own agenda, it is our Indigenous economy. We are coming soon with more news!”

—Erick Valerio
Kowen Poetsath SAC, Peru

• • • •

The opportunity to link with retailers and investors highlighted the fact that niche markets and links to global brands present a particularly interesting opportunity to build upon, with retailers interested to engage, build partnerships and operate in under the principles presented by the Indigenous leaders.

Until now, Indigenous leaders have heavily focused on their policy advocacy in relation to tenure and forest protection, for obvious reasons. **Leaders are very clear that without strong economic opportunities for their youth, forest protection is even more at risk.** The meeting helped in their process to present a more economic narrative in their advocacy and plans.

Funded by Fondation Philanthropique Famille Sandoz

Promoting underutilised farmers' seeds in Cambodia

Cambodia's rice production faces numerous challenges that threaten both its sustainability and the livelihoods of farmers.

The drive for higher yields has led to the widespread use of modern rice varieties that are designed primarily for productivity, often at the expense of other important traits such as nutritional value, stress tolerance, and flavour. Now, it is estimated that 75% of Cambodia's traditional rice varieties have been lost due to the focus on maximising modern varieties.

To counter this trend, FFORA, with support from the Fondation Philanthropique Famille Sandoz, is financing the Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development to support a national member in Cambodia, the Farmer and Nature Net Association and a local cooperative, CamSeed, specialised in seed production.



Reflections on locally-led financial mechanisms...

This project is a proof of concept in both the power of farmers' and Indigenous organisations and their capacity to drive and manage very well finance directly to the people who on the ground.

For CamSeed the ability to invest in locally driven finance mechanisms (with a revolving fund that seed producers can access), and infrastructure requirements (the procurement of a drier machine) is critical for supply chain sustainability.

Locally-driven finance and processing units are all too often underfunded in traditional aid projects. However, they are often what farmers need most, while it ensures sustainability beyond strict project timeframes.

At the same time, working through a regional farmers' organisation has ensured that the project is grounded in local reality and responding to the farmers' needs, all this with the potential to scale up successful practices very easily.

The Asian Farmers Association has a long-standing working relationship with their members and provides the exact technical and financial support needed, without taking extra time to run

needs assessment and develop working relationships. At the same time, they know their members in other regions and easily identified seed producers from other countries in Asia to benefit from practical learning and innovative ideas.

A very good case to illustrate the Family Farmers for Climate Action slogan: "Farmers organisations are bigger, better, faster, and cheaper implementers of climate finance."



Small sample of local Cambodian farmers seeds presented by CamSeed.

© FFORA

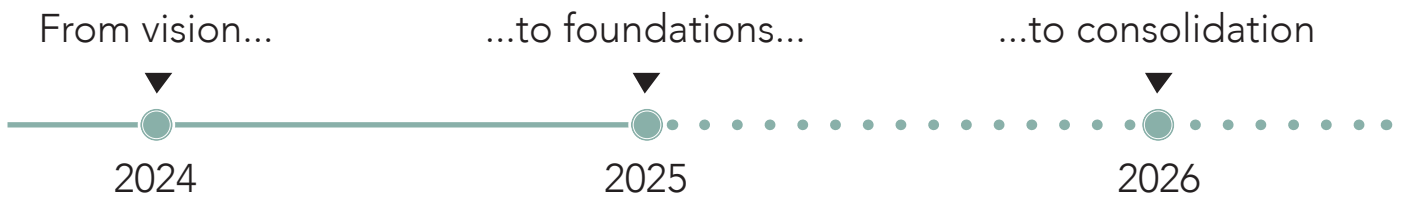
This three-year initiative focuses on supporting CamSeed, not only to work on production but also to develop the market and increase demand for these seeds – ensuring an integrated approach to the issue. The cooperative aims to increase production of 3 traditional rice species, supporting seed producers to benefit over 10,000 smallholder rice farmers.

Finance readiness is being built with financial trainings but also with trust in their existing processes and direct investment. FFORA provided funding for a seed drying machine necessary to diminish post-harvest loss. CamSeed not only matched the funds but spontaneously undertook a very thorough procurement process to ensure

they would make the best choice for the farmers. The project is also providing initial capital to develop a revolving community fund to help farmers in buying organic input before they get revenue from their seeds.

Thanks to the wide network of the Asian Farmers Association who represents 12 million smallholder farmers across 16 countries, the project launch in Cambodia was coupled with the first learning exchange, which included a field visit and learning exchange with the rice cooperative, attended by 96 participants including farmers from Laos, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste.

LOOKING FORWARD



FFORA is ours and with committed supporters, we are excited to take the next steps in shaping national, regional and global finance systems. With FFORA and their support to the Family Farmers for Climate Action campaign, we will continue raising our voice and increase finance to smallholder farmers' organisations for regenerative and nature-based farming systems.

—Elizabeth Nsimadala, President of the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation



Since sitting together with FFORA and starting to build ideas for an Indigenous-led global trade facility we have seen great progress. The concept is taking shape and Indigenous leaders are committed to it. I count on FFORA to take the next steps, together with us, to establish the building blocks for a mechanism that will help us grow a truly Indigenous economy, based on our vision and our principles.

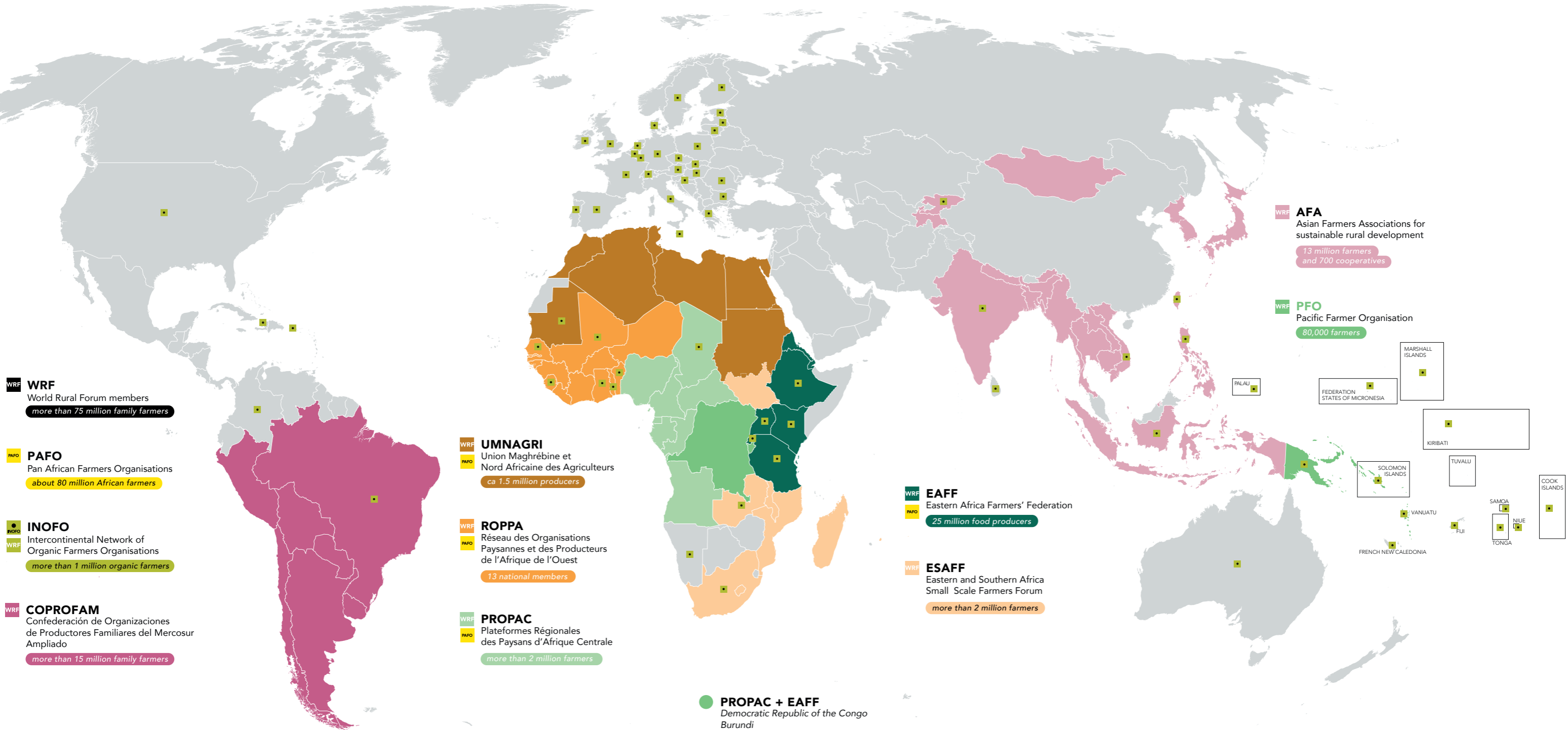
—Juan Carlos Jintiach, Executive Secretary Global Alliance of Territorial Communities



Rice seed producer showing one of her plots behind CamSeed warehouse.



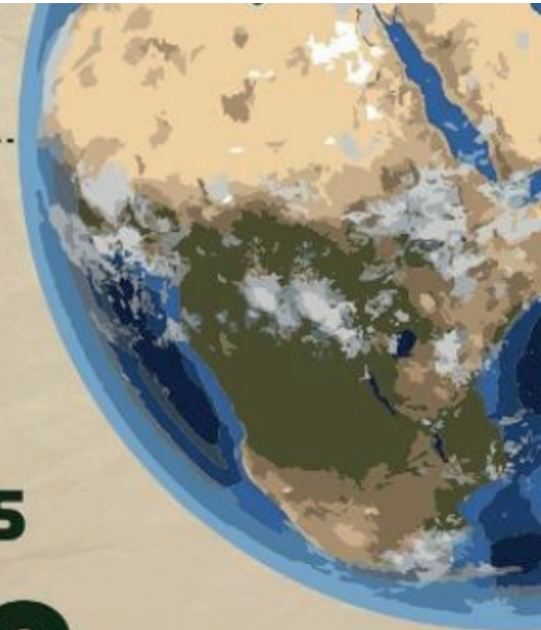
ORGANISATIONS OF THE FAMILY FARMERS FOR CLIMATE ACTION



OUR MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS GUARANTEE OUR LEGITIMACY AND CONNECTION TO THE TERRITORIES.



Global Alliance
of Territorial Communities



OUR ALLIANCE REPRESENTS

35 24 958

million people living in forest territories from 35 countries, and we are defenders of over 24 million hectares of land.

Through our **11 years** of collective work we have made strides towards our five demands.

- 
 Land Rights
- 
 Free, prior and informed consent
- 
 Direct financing
- 
 Protection of life
- 
 Traditional knowledge

From Vision to Foundations

Getting finance to
smallholder farmers' organisations and
Indigenous Peoples

FFORA FIRST REPORT

May 2026



FFORA

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RESTORATIVE ACTION

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