



## Outcomes Report

# Breakthrough Workshop Indigenous Economy and Just Resilience



Consortio de Gobiernos  
Autónomos Provinciales  
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# Breakthrough Workshop on Indigenous Economy and Just Resilience

The “Breakthrough Workshop on Indigenous Economy and Just Resilience”, held in the Ecuadorian Amazon (Tena, Napo) from January 20 to 24, brought together indigenous leaders, representatives of provincial governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international entities with experience in environmental issues and cooperation with indigenous communities.

The main objective of the workshop was to build consensus on the importance of supporting the indigenous economy, promote the recognition of just resilience, and develop concrete strategies to promote a breakthrough of the indigenous economy at COP30. During the five days of activities, attendees participated in knowledge-sharing sessions, visits to chakras (an ancestral agroforestry model) and other indigenous economic models, and in collaborative working groups. Challenges and opportunities were explored to consolidate and promote economic models that integrate traditional knowledge with innovative approaches to conservation and sustainable development.

The workshop also served as a platform for connection and mutual learning, where communities, provincial authorities and national and international cooperating partners were able to share experiences, identify areas of cooperation and lay the foundations for future joint initiatives. It was an important opportunity to highlight the fundamental role of the Decentralized Autonomous Governments (GADs) in supporting these models and integrating them into provincial policies. This represented a significant step towards the design and implementation of public policies that recognize and enhance indigenous economies as a key pillar for the fair resilience of Amazonian territories at the regional level.

The workshop was possible thanks to the financial support of the Scottish Government, the Consortium of Provincial Autonomous Governments of Ecuador (CONGOPE), Nature4Climate, and Nature and Culture International, and the collaboration of Wiñak and the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities.



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## Day 1: Welcome and context of the Indigenous Economy

The workshop began with a Kichwa Guayusa ceremony on the banks of the Jatunyacu River, a moment of connection with nature and the indigenous worldview. This ceremony allowed participants to experience an ancestral tradition and gave them the opportunity to learn more about local gastronomy and rituals, which are a fundamental part of the life of the Shandia community, which hosted the workshop participants throughout the week. After this cultural encounter, the day continued in the event hall, where local authorities gave welcoming words. Among the authorities were Nelson Cerda, President of the Wiñak Association; Marco Grefa, President of the Chakra Corporation; Rocío Cerda, representative of the women's organizations of Napo; Pedro Andi, representing the Prefect of Napo; Alandy Torres, representing the Mayor of Tena; Byron Andi, President of the Parish of Talag; Carolina Estrella, Director of Environment of CONGOPE; Jordan Harris, Executive Director of Regions4; and James Lloyd, Head of Strategy and Promotion at Nature4Climate, moderated by Michel Laforge of Mirachik.

They emphasized the importance of the workshop for the actors in the territory, highlighting the fundamental role of strengthening the indigenous economy and its contribution to just resilience. Next, Juan Carlos Jintiach, Executive Secretary of the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities, presented the context of the indigenous economy, highlighting the challenges faced by communities, as well as the potential of traditional productive systems.

Participants were then divided into two groups, which alternated between two complementary activities:

### 1. Indigenous Entrepreneurship Fair

In this space, various indigenous associations presented their products and production models (Wiñak, Kallary, Tsatsayaku, Inti, Ally Wayusa, Azaicero, Asopromas, Dary Aguinda, Chakra Corporation, Daipare, ASOPROMÁS, APKP and Sacha Waysa). They shared their knowledge on sustainable resource management and the added value of their initiatives. This fair served as an opportunity to make the work of the communities visible and to foster collaboration networks.

### 2. Visit to an Amazonian Chakra

In parallel, the other group visited an Amazonian chakra (owned by one of the Kallari group's partners), a traditional agroforestry system that reflects the deep relationship of indigenous peoples with biodiversity. During the tour, participants learned first-hand about the cultivation, harvesting and planting practices of key products for the indigenous economy, such as cocoa, honey and vanilla.

The groups exchanged activities and the day ended with a welcome dinner, followed by a group reflection session. In this space, the participants shared their first impressions of the experiences they had lived, highlighting the importance of the articulation between communities, governments and international organizations for the promotion of inclusive and sustainable economic models.



## Day 2: Technological innovation and resistance strategies

The second day of the workshop was held in the El Mirador community, where the hosts shared their experiences in strengthening their chakras and their strategies for territorial defense. As part of the day's agenda, a demonstration of MRV (Monitoring, Reporting and Verification) technology was presented, through the use of drones, GPS and mapping platforms, innovative tools that allow visualizing both the productive potential of the chakras and the environmental threats they face, such as illegal mining and deforestation. In this context, the "Napo Resiste" initiative was unveiled, an indigenous resistance platform that seeks to protect Amazonian territories from extractive activities such as illegal mining, its impact on the health of communities and on environmental degradation, especially of rivers.

Meanwhile, another group of participants visited an Amazonian chakra, where they were able to learn about local crop varieties, their properties, the spiritual meaning of certain trees, production techniques, as well as the value of different types of cocoa, including Criollo or porcelain cocoa, which contains white almonds.

During dinner, participants shared their reflections on what they had learned during the day, the impact of illegal mining in the region and the need to adopt development strategies that allow successful territorial management models to be replicated with the support of international cooperation.

## Zamora Chinchipe

Representatives of the Prefecture of Zamora Chinchipe, Teresita Cabrera, Coordinator of the Office of Cooperation and International Relations, and Juan Carlos Montaña, technician of AGROZPACHÍN, presented key initiatives of their province in bioeconomy, international cooperation and resilience together with indigenous communities. They highlighted the creation of the International Cooperation Roundtable, a space to articulate strategic support, and the "Sembrando Vida" ("Harvesting Life") plan, which involves 800 people in the restoration of degraded ecosystems through a participatory approach. They also addressed the Gender Action Plan, aimed at strengthening the inclusion of women and young people in sustainable development, promoting productive alternatives and fair trade.

They also mentioned the impact of the coffee study in Palanda, which has revolutionized the history of ancestral cocoa in the region. Finally, they highlighted the creation of a bio-input plant, which will allow producers to reduce the use of harmful fertilizers, promoting more sustainable agricultural practices.

Next, Nancy Paz, representative of the Asociación de Producción de Cacao y Derivados Aromas del Sur (ASOPROMÁS), shared the work model based on agroecological education with a gender focus. The association has developed agroecology schools, training communities in the production of bioinputs, pruning and sustainable agricultural techniques. In addition, they have promoted youth participation, creating spaces where young people can integrate into the cocoa value chain and visualize economic opportunities within their territories. Thanks to the work of ASOPROMÁS and the support of international cooperation, the construction of a chocolate processing plant was achieved, allowing the launch of the "Kujeñito" brand. The association has participated in national and international fairs, consolidating its presence in the market and achieving the award for the best cocoa paste at the Expo Amazonía in 2019. In an effort to expand, they made their first direct export of cocoa to Chile and have increased their number of partners to 160 producers in the process of organic certification.

Anderson Toledo, representative of the National Federation of the Shuar Nationality (FEPNASH ZCH), shared the history of the association, which since its founding in 2007 has collaborated with 32 communities and more than 4,000 people in the province of Zamora Chinchipe. The federation has promoted sustainable agriculture, livestock and the preservation of the Shuar culture, in addition to managing a community reserve and developing products such as copal oil, which represents a key source of income for the community.



### Day 3: Strengthening indigenous and provincial initiatives

The third day was dedicated to learning about key initiatives for the sustainability and strengthening of the local indigenous economy. The day began with a visit to the headquarters of Wiñak, an agro-artisanal organization made up of Kichwa families that have developed a successful model for marketing and commercializing indigenous products.

Wiñak has positioned itself as a reference in the production of high-quality chocolate and guayusa, promoting fair trade and providing technical and financial assistance to its members. During the visit, they taught participants about their production process and the strategies they use to guarantee fair prices to local producers. In addition, Wiñak is in the process of georeferencing its products and creating a digital database.

Later, we delved into the Amazonian chakra of Kallari, an ancestrally cultivated ecosystem that combines agricultural production with environmental conservation. The chakra, maintained by the Kichwa community, is home to more than 90 species of fruits, vegetables, tropical trees and medicinal plants, including guayusa, cacao, breadfruit, wild grape, achotillo, motete, papaya, pineapple, orito, pies muyo, garabato yuyo, palmito, yuca and guaba. In this space, we participated in a ritual to ask for a good harvest and discussed the nutritional benefits of native foods, highlighting their importance in food sovereignty. Proposals for nutritional value workshops and a cooking class project were also explored as part of community tourism in the region, with the aim of strengthening the transmission of knowledge and generating new economic opportunities.

**During the conversations at the chakra, community members expressed concerns about issues such as water and soil pollution caused by mining, the lack of training to guide producers toward sustainable alternatives, and the need for projects that improve not only the economy but also the emotional and social well-being of families. They highlighted the importance of training and having clear work strategies to empower farmers and strengthen their rights, especially those of women, while also ensuring the transmission of knowledge to future generations.**



**In the afternoon, the two groups exchanged destinations to ensure that all attendees could experience both experiences, and in the evening, representatives of the provincial governments presented their initiatives in bioeconomy and environmental conservation in collaboration with communities and nationalities from their regions.**

## Pastaza

Representatives of the Prefecture of Pastaza, Lenin Valencia, Analyst of Productive Development, and Bryam Gonzalez, Technician of the Department of Environmental Management, shared the province's efforts to develop productive value chains aligned with bioeconomy, an initiative that emerged from the Implementation Plan (PDI), consulted with the nationalities of the province. Key products such as vanilla, peanuts, achiote and cocoa have been identified, many of these chains led by women, who represent 70% of the associations. The province has 298 producers of various nationalities, such as the Achuar, Kichwa and Waorani, who work in sustainable agroecological systems. In terms of conservation and restoration, 110 hectares have been recovered in one year and there is an expectation of the restoration of additional 155 hectares. A new approach to restoration was implemented, where each plant is monitored for two years to ensure its survival. In addition, there were proposals to explore phytofeeding technology with six plant species capable of recovering soils contaminated by mining.

Also from Pastaza, Gladys Simbaña and Isabel Nenquimo, representatives of the Amazonian Agricultural Production Association OMEDE OKIYEMONI, presented DAIPARE, a brand dedicated to the transformation of Amazonian products such as ginger and turmeric into nourishing creams for the face and body, promoting the valorization of ancestral knowledge without affecting the ecosystem. They also highlighted how communities have maintained their agricultural production and the use of natural medicines, especially during the pandemic. Their goal is to consolidate their products in the commercial market without losing their cultural identity and sustainable practices.

## Morona Santiago

The team from the Prefecture of Morona Santiago, represented by Roberto Minda, Head of International Cooperation, Genn Castillo, General Director of Environmental Management of Hydrographic Basins, Irrigation and Drainage and Jacinto Rivera, General Director of Bioeconomy and Sustainable Development, presented their management model based on the participation of indigenous peoples, highlighting that for the first time a member of the Achuar nation has been elected Prefect in the province. The Cooperation Roundtable for Conservation and Sustainable Development was presented, which involves 23 cooperators, including NGOs and universities, to coordinate actions and avoid duplication of efforts in the territory. In terms of conservation, agreements were signed with local associations to protect natural areas, offering non-monetary incentives such as solar panels and water filters. The certification of organic products and the designation of origin for emblematic products such as peanuts and pitahaya are being promoted, and Morona Santiago is sought to be positioned as a sustainable tourist destination.

Esteban Jua, vice president of the Shuar Nation of Ecuador (NASHE), highlighted the importance of strengthening indigenous organizations and consolidating alliances with cooperating partners to promote sustainable projects. He called on the international community to visit and learn first-hand about the conservation and development efforts carried out by Amazonian peoples.

## Napo

Representatives of the Prefecture of Napo, Whitney Otero, Animal Health and Production Analyst, and Pedro Andi, Intercultural Support Analyst, presented the Chakra Group initiative, a space for coordination, collective action, technical assistance and institutional support for the implementation of the Amazonian Kichwa Chakra Ordinance. Its objective is to promote dialogue between actors to develop strategies to address challenges such as monocultures, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, climate change, gender and market inequalities, malnutrition and pollution. Its main actions include the articulation of actors and the promotion of cooperation in the territory, the Chakra School to strengthen knowledge, the link with the tourism and gastronomy sector through the TURCOM Network and the Chakra Chocolate and Tourism Route, the Chakra Seal that certifies products of origin, the recognition of Chakra as an Ingenious System of Global Agricultural Production (SIPAM) and the promotion of strategic research related to this model.

## Peru and Mexico

Erik Valerio presented the case of the Association for the Conservation and Management of the Yanesha Communal Reserve (AMARCY), which is part of the communal reserve co-management model (a system in which indigenous communities jointly manage protected natural areas with the State, as is the case with the 10 communal reserves in Peru). Within the Yanesha Communal Reserve, AMARCY has developed a unique experience with native cacao, identifying wild trees that are more than 50 to 100 years old, which had not previously been valued. In 2019, its Eshpe cacao won first place in the National Cocoa Competition, standing out for its fruity and cinnamon notes. Since then, they have worked on its sustainable use, managing contracts with the State and management plans until 2025. In order to strengthen the community's economic autonomy, in 2022 they created the indigenous social enterprise Kowen Poetsath ("Beautiful Forest"), through which they market cocoa under their own brands.

Niki Lino presented Tosepan, which means “always united.” Tosepan represents a model of indigenous solidarity economy in the Sierra Nororiental of Puebla, with a presence in 39 municipalities (31 in Puebla and 8 in Veracruz). It brings together 53,000 members, of which 78% are indigenous Nahua and Totonac, and 65% are women, promoting a strong focus on intergenerational change. Although their main production is coffee, they also grow mint, vanilla, citrus and cocoa, integrating these products into an agroecological system that protects the coffee-growing territory. Its cooperative structure ranges from food production and transformation to community tourism, integral health, sustainable housing and savings and credit systems, ensuring an economic model that prioritizes sustainability, self-determination and equity.

María Areli Castellanos presented the Totonacapan Regional Foresters Association “Limaxtum”, made up of Totonac women. She highlighted the allspice-milpa agroforestry system. She explained the characteristics and difficulties regarding its management and marketing. In addition, she highlighted its association with other crops such as corn, beans, honey and vanilla, thus promoting food security. Women play a fundamental role in this system, which is carried out with sustainable practices and avoiding the use of chemicals.

## Day 4: Dialogue on Indigenous Economy and Just Resilience

On the fourth day, participants visited the Laguna Azul, where they were able to learn first-hand about a tourism model led by indigenous communities. In that space, dialogue sessions were held on the progress and challenges in building a resilient and just indigenous economy. Participants were divided into four groups and took turns answering the following questions collaboratively:

### Indigenous economy and just resilience

What is indigenous economy and what is not?  
The principles that support it and its relationship with just resilience were reflected upon.

### Indigenous organizations and support models

What governance structures are needed to consolidate the indigenous economy?  
Examples of successful models were shared.

### Technical support from allies and NGOs

What types of support and partnerships are required? The most effective forms of assistance and the practices that are not helpful were identified.

### Role of public institutions

What should be the role of public institutions?  
Policies, legislative frameworks and actions necessary to generate a more favorable environment for indigenous entrepreneurship were analyzed.

One of the most important consensuses reached during the day was the definition of the fundamental principles that govern the **indigenous economy**, highlighting that there is no unique model, as it varies according to the community and its cultural identity.

**Self-determination and self-governance** are key, allowing communities to make autonomous decisions about their territories and resources. The **deep relationship with nature** was highlighted, prioritizing harmony over exploitation, and an economic model based on **solidarity and collective well-being**, with a focus on subsistence and equity. The **central role of women and the spiritual dimension** in the organization of work were also recognized.

Community economic initiatives such as agroforestry, ecotourism and sustainable use of resources were discussed, always maintaining biodiversity and soil fertility and with the aim of obtaining equitable compensation for family and community work.



It was concluded that the indigenous economy does not include practices that involve deforestation, monoculture, forced displacement or territorial conflicts, and that traditional market logic is not compatible with these models. The concept of **just resilience** was another of the topics addressed. This emerging term refers to the need for climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation measures to not only be environmentally sustainable, but also **guarantee social justice and inclusion**. It was emphasized that **indigenous communities must be an active part of decision-making** and that they are direct beneficiaries of fair resilience efforts. Not only that, but the **indigenous economy also contributes to climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation**, through the diversity of agricultural and economic practices, avoiding harmful extractive activities such as monoculture or deforestation.

Despite their potential, indigenous economic models face multiple challenges. One of the main obstacles is unequal competition with external economic actors who impose unfavorable conditions and exploit resources without regulation. The difficulty of maintaining the logic of reciprocity and community when more commercial business models are introduced was also identified. Legal and health barriers were another point of concern, since many regulations imposed from external actors do not take into account the particularities of indigenous productive systems. In addition, there was evidence of a lack of security in land tenure, limited access to financing, and the absence of public policies that strengthen these development models.

The role of public institutions, such as prefectures and regional governments, was also a key point of discussion, highlighting their role as generators of favorable conditions to strengthen the work of indigenous producers. The possibility of designing policies and regulatory frameworks aligned with community realities was raised, as well as the importance of creating spaces for participatory coordination where communities have an active voice. The simplification of administrative processes and the creation of financial mechanisms that prioritize indigenous initiatives were also proposed, ensuring that economic support comes from coherent territorial strategies and not from isolated projects.

At the international level, emphasis was placed on the need to create platforms that make the indigenous economy visible in global spaces, such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. It was also emphasized that support processes must be flexible and adapt to the reality of the communities, avoiding rigid models imposed externally.

The day left open some questions for future discussions. There is still uncertainty about how to scale up production without losing the essence of indigenous principles. Questions were also raised about the impact of certain certifications that, while they may open markets, are often perceived as external impositions that do not respect traditions and community ways of life. The day concluded with a cultural event where the diversity and richness of the Amazonian indigenous identity of Napo was celebrated.



Day 5: Closing and defining next steps

The final day of the workshop began with a recap of the key moments of the week through a photo presentation and a summary of the main lessons learned. Juan Carlos Jintiach, Executive Secretary of the Global Alliance of Territorial Partnerships, presented the roadmap to COP30, which covers key events such as the General Assembly of the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (AGCT), the UN Permanent Forum, the Sustainable Territorial Action Summit, the UNFCCC Intersessional, the New York Climate Week and the Latin American and Caribbean Climate Week (LACCW), and called for international action to support the indigenous economy.

Next, Barbel Henneberger, Senior Forest Manager at EDF, Steve Schwartzman, Senior Director of Tropical Forest Policy, and Garo Batmanian, Director General of the Brazilian Forest Service (via videoconference), presented the Fondo Florestal Tropical para Sempre (TFFF) as an innovative alternative for sustainable financing with a view to its launch at COP30. Unlike other funds, the TFFF is based on private resources, generating reliable and long-term financial incentives for those who conserve tropical forests. Its distribution model guarantees that at least 20% of the resources go directly to indigenous communities, establishing criteria of transparency and commitment to conservation. This initiative represents an opportunity to strengthen indigenous management of territories and secure direct financing for their projects.

Bruno Paladines, Project Coordinator at Nature and Culture International, then presented the Amazon Platform, a consolidated model of territorial governance in the Ecuadorian Amazon that articulates efforts between prefectures and the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE). The importance of recognizing territories of life through provincial ordinances and strengthening joint planning and management tools was highlighted.

This approach seeks to ensure that communities are protagonists in the management of their territories, promoting development based on self-determination and sustainability.

The authorities of the provinces of Zamora Chinchipe, Morona Santiago, Napo and Pastaza shared their vision and commitments:

Karla Reátegui, Prefect of Zamora Chinchipe, stressed the importance of Amazonian peoples arriving at COP30 strengthened and with a clear proposal. She emphasized that international cooperation must reach indigenous communities directly, strengthening their institutions, with the GADs as strategic allies, but without displacing indigenous leadership. She highlighted the collaboration with Nature and Culture International for the conservation of the territory, and mentioned that Zamora Chinchipe has made progress in the development of agreements that allow communities to be compensated for conserving nature.



Tiyua Uyunkar, Prefect of Morona Santiago, highlighted the importance of COP30 as a key space to make the voice of indigenous peoples visible and consolidate strategic collaborations at the international level. He pointed out that participation in these forums allows the demands of the Amazonian territories to be positioned and cooperation for conservation and sustainable development to be strengthened. However, he warned about the risk of these events becoming simple symbolic scenarios, where the photo with indigenous leaders is sought without generating real commitments or structural changes. He stressed the need for communities to arrive organized, with clear proposals and with the support of strategic alliances that guarantee a tangible impact in their territories. He also highlighted the work being carried out by the Prefecture to promote the indigenous economy in the province and the work with cooperators in the territory.

Natalia Tanguila, Vice-Prefect of Napo, emphasized the need to restructure strategies within the prefectures and strengthen alliances with NGOs and aid workers. She highlighted the great productive potential of her province, with more than 600 organizations dedicated to the production of cocoa, vanilla, cassava and coffee, but warned about the lack of infrastructure, collection centers and transportation, which limits access to fair markets. She criticized that many government decisions do not consider community needs and advocated regulating the cocoa trade, to avoid abuses by middlemen and ensure that producers receive fair compensation.

Lineth Calapucha, Vice-Prefect of Pastaza, made a strong call to guarantee the participation of communities in decision-making. She denounced that in the past public policies did not respect indigenous worldviews or consult communities, which generated an exclusive development model. She highlighted that 82% of the territory of Pastaza is conserved, largely thanks to the management of indigenous peoples, and underlined the fundamental role of women in the indigenous economy, although their work and role remains without adequate recognition. She also warned about the loss of indigenous languages and cultures, structural racism and the need for public policies to integrate ancestral knowledge and respect the rights of indigenous peoples.

Next, Kleber Karipuna, President of the GATC and representative of the APIB, together with Levi Sucre, President of the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMBP), presented their conclusions of the week and their vision towards COP30, highlighting the GATC General Assembly in February as a key event to define strategies.

The event concluded with remarks from James Lloyd of Nature4Climate and Jordan Harris of Regions4 calling for unity and commitment to continue strengthening the indigenous economy and fair resilience. The importance of collaboration between communities, subnational governments and cooperating agencies to ensure equitable distribution of resources was highlighted. With an eye on COP30 in Belém, participants said goodbye with the aim of consolidating concrete proposals and joint strategies that reflect the priorities of the Amazonian peoples.



# Workshop results

The workshop represented an important milestone in the consolidation of the indigenous economy as a fundamental pillar in the transition towards a global model that promotes just resilience. Through a collaborative approach, significant progress was made in political commitments, and the strengthening of capacities and strategic networks.

Greater alignment was achieved between regional (provincial) government policies and indigenous economic models, in order to strengthen their recognition within territorial strategies for climate action and biodiversity conservation. In addition, training in drone technology and satellite mapping was carried out, strengthening the capacity and knowledge of indigenous communities and provincial governments for the management and monitoring of their territories.

In regards to partnerships, the workshop strengthened collaboration between indigenous peoples, provincial governments, NGOs and the private sector, consolidating a joint work space for the development of economic models that prioritize nature and community well-being. Likewise, the foundations were laid for greater international recognition of the principles of the indigenous economy, positioning them as a fundamental piece in caring for the environment.

The concept of just resilience was promoted as a key approach to ensure that climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation strategies are socially equitable and include the active participation and leadership of indigenous and local communities, addressing social inequalities to ensure that there is no disproportionate burden on the most vulnerable communities.

# Next steps towards COP30

With COP30 on the horizon, the coming months will be key to consolidating these advances and bringing the indigenous economy and just resilience to the centre of global debates. Priority objectives include:

- Continue conceptualizing and disseminating the concept of just resilience among Regions4 members to guide the creation of quality regional environmental projects.
- Continue to promote the integration of indigenous economies and fair resilience into subnational policies and their recognition within global climate action and biodiversity strategies.
- Strengthen work with strategic allies to expand access to financing and resources that allow scaling up indigenous economic models, with the support of regional governments.
- Develop reference materials, including policy briefs and case studies, to document best practices identified at the workshop.
- Identify and consolidate initiatives from the Ecuadorian Amazon and other regions of the Global South in a portfolio of Just Resilience projects at the regional level, with the aim of attracting investment and scaling resilience models.
- Prepare the roadmap for COP30, consolidating proposals and strategies that make visible and strengthen initiatives led by indigenous communities in collaboration with subnational governments.





This workshop was supported by:





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