



Development with Identity – Policy, Action Plan and Programs Inter-American Development Bank

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is committed to advancing the development with identity of indigenous peoples. The indigenous peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean are heirs and creators of an important natural, cultural and social heritage. The total number of indigenous people is estimated at 40 to 50 million, or approximately 8 to 10 percent of the region's population. Indigenous people account for at least half of the population in places such as Bolivia, Guatemala, and Peru, and face poverty rates as high as 90% in some countries.

In 2006, the Bank approved an Operational Policy on Indigenous Peoples (OP-765) and a Strategy for Indigenous Peoples (GN-2387-5). The Operational Policy and the Strategy for Indigenous Development establish long-term objectives, principles, and rules for Bank activities with indigenous peoples. The Policy and Strategy were reviewed by the independent Office of Evaluation (OVE) of the IDB in 2012. The findings of this OVE report inform improvements to Bank monitoring systems and a Bank action plan to promote the development with identity of indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Peoples are an integral part of IDB institutional priorities. The GCI-9 Results Framework, a part of the Ninth General Capital Increase (GCI-9),¹ captures the contribution of the Bank activities to regional development. This framework obligates the Bank to report on the participation of indigenous peoples in projects in the following areas: health, targeted anti-poverty programs, water provision, sanitary connections, upgraded dwellings, civil or identification registries, public low-carbon transportation systems, and agricultural services and investments.

Action Plan

The Action Plan for Development with Identity for Indigenous Peoples and Peoples of African Descent promotes the development and use of a range of public and private sector instruments to enhance the institutional, technical, and financial capacity of the

¹ The IDB Board of Governors approved the Ninth General Capital Increase (GCI-9) to face the increasing demand for resources and to respond to the development needs related to reducing poverty and inequality.

Bank and the region to advance development with identity.² The Plan prioritizes the role of place and culture for indigenous peoples in topics such as biodiversity, climate change, and benefits sharing to promote indigenous development with identity. The plan recognizes the strategic advantages and spiritual importance of place, as the sphere where indigenous peoples live and harness their traditional knowledge in harmony with nature. The plan also recognizes the importance of culture – specifically the unique, traditions and beliefs of diverse indigenous peoples that are of global importance, yet often remain undervalued in economic, environmental and social policy making.

The overlap between biodiversity richness and indigenous and traditional territories highlights the important contribution of indigenous peoples to better understanding of how to sustainably harvest natural resources. Despite mounting evidence on the role of indigenous peoples as environment stewards, they tend to participate less than other groups in incentive-based conservation and benefits sharing programs. The Bank is developing a project to investigate how government eco-system programs can be better harnessed by indigenous peoples for sustainable development in their territories. Further, the IDB is financing community-led pilots and programs to demonstrate the role of traditional knowledge in preserving natural resources for future generations through small-scale climate change adaptation efforts in Honduras and Guatemala. Indigenous and traditional peoples are part of the IDB's new biodiversity and eco-systems services initiative, anticipated for Board approval in 2013, which includes potential financing partnership opportunities for indigenous peoples with governments and the private sector.

In the private sector, the Bank is giving increased attention to benefits sharing with indigenous peoples. The focus is on the provision of technical support to enable larger IDB client companies to enhance competitiveness, and financial returns, while at the same time generating concrete benefits for local indigenous partners through sustainable investments.

In December 2012, the IDB reaffirmed a commitment to indigenous peoples through a series of programs in recognition of the Oxlajuj Baqtun – the start of a new Maya era. The first is a regional community-led tourism project that promotes visibility of Mayan cultures and archeological sites, while at the same time promoting development with identity in indigenous communities. The second initiative was the hosting of the exhibit “Heavenly Jade of the Maya,” a showcase of recently excavated Maya artifacts from Guatemala, held in IDB headquarters from December 2012 to February 2013.

² Development with identity refers to a process that includes strengthening indigenous peoples, harmony and sustained interaction with the environment, sound management of natural resources and territories, the creation and exercise of authority, and respect for the rights and values of indigenous peoples in accordance with their own worldview and governance principles. Based on the values of equity, interconnectedness, reciprocity, and solidarity the Inter-American Development Bank aims to create the conditions upon which indigenous peoples can thrive and grow in harmony with their surroundings by capitalizing on the potential of their cultural, natural, and social assets according to their own priorities.

Gender and Indigenous Peoples

Gender is a cross-cutting theme in the Operational Policy on Indigenous Peoples (OP-765). The worldview of many indigenous peoples bases gender relations on duality and balance. Nevertheless, many indigenous women find themselves in a position of inequality. In recent years, organizations led by indigenous women have gained greater recognition for their roles in families, communities, indigenous economies, and as intergenerational guardians of cultural heritage. Indigenous women are increasingly advocating for gender equity and equal opportunity based on their own worldview, and the protection of indigenous women's rights.

The Inter-American Development Bank, in collaboration with local indigenous women's organizations, has developed a detailed analysis of the current condition of indigenous maternal and infant health in rural communities in Latin America. This study identified the main barriers impeding indigenous women from receiving prenatal care, and has provided additional analysis on the role of traditional medicine and cultural sensitivity training for health professionals. The study incorporates guidelines for government and civil society initiatives in the area of health that address economic, geographic and cultural barriers to accessing health services. The findings provide instruments for developing monitoring and evaluation systems in conjunction with indigenous communities to determine the success of health programs.³

A new IDB project in Guatemala works to identify best practices to promote the empowerment of indigenous girls, who are frequently the most disadvantaged segment of the population in Latin America. Additionally, in the area of gender empowerment through violence prevention, the IDB has designed a new program in Bolivia to implement recent legislation on violence against women and to strengthen local networks to offer quality services to survivors of violence, as well as prevent it from occurring. This project will work with local indigenous communities to ensure their active participation in the design and execution of the project.

Consultation and Indigenous Peoples

The design and implementation of effective consultation processes with indigenous peoples is an issue of significant importance for Bank operations.⁴ In 2012, the IDB initiated a process with indigenous organizations, civil society, traditional leaders and

³ The findings of this research can be found in the Inter-American Development Bank publication *Salud de la mujer indígena: Intervenciones para reducir la muerte materna* (Indigenous Women's Health: Interventions to Reduce Maternal Mortality).

⁴ Over the period 2007-2011, the total number of projects triggering the Operational Policy on Indigenous Peoples (OP 765), which includes a requirement for project proponents to consult with indigenous peoples who may be affected by a proposed project, increased from 19 projects in 2007 to 78 projects in 2011. Those 78 projects represented 13% of all projects undergoing an Environmental and Social Review (ESR) in 2011, up from 8% in 2010. Preliminary data from 2012 suggest even higher numbers for the most recent period.

academics to develop better guidance mechanisms for consultation with indigenous peoples. This work is ongoing and will lead to specific guidance notes and complementary tools on engagement with indigenous peoples, produced by the unit responsible for environmental and social safeguards at the Bank.