



NETFUND POLICY ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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Contributors

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Definition of Terms

Indigenous people	The United Nations describes Indigenous Peoples as descendants or inhabitants of a territory before colonization or the establishment of current state boundaries; Have traceable historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies; Have a strong link to land and natural resources to sustain their livelihoods, social organisation, culture, traditions, and beliefs; Have distinct social, economic or political systems; Have distinct language, culture and beliefs; Form non-dominant groups of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as distinct peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems, and may be disadvantaged in developmental processes as a result of their identity The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 describes an indigenous community as a traditional community that has remained outside the mainstream social and economic life of Kenya to preserve its distinct culture and identity from assimilation. Such communities have maintained their traditional lifestyle and livelihoods, such as hunting and gathering.
Local Communities	Non-indigenous communities living within the same geographical area and who are connected through common resource use, local services, and social practices. They may hold collective rights, particularly in relation to land tenure and natural resource management.
Collective attachment	Signifies that the groups generally consider their lands and resources to be collective assets interlinked with their culture and identity. It also signifies that these groups' livelihoods, economies, modes of production, social organization and cultural and spiritual circumstances are generally linked to particular territories and natural resources. Collective attachment may be held over geographically distinct habitats, ancestral territories, areas of seasonal use or occupation and the natural resources
Ethnic Minority	A distinct ethnic community within the population that is numerically smaller and socially, politically or economically disadvantaged in comparison to dominant or majority communities in a given context.

Marginalization	A structural process through which individuals or communities are excluded from meaningful participation in political, social, economic, and cultural life, often due to identity-based discrimination
Ethnic Minorities and Marginalised Communities	Communities who, due to their distinct ethnic, cultural, linguistic, geographic, or socioeconomic characteristics, face systemic exclusion and limited access to services, opportunities, and decision-making processes, who were or are disadvantaged by discrimination on one or more of the grounds in Article 27(4) of the Constitution
Affirmative Action	Special measures and initiatives designed to redress historical disadvantages and promote equality for ethnic minorities, indigenous and marginalised communities, including through targeted representation, resource allocation, and social protection
Environmental and Social Impact Assessment	A systematic study conducted to determine whether a programme, activity or project will have adverse impacts on the environment
Environmental and Social Management Plan	Details of project activities, impacts, mitigation measures, time schedule, costs, responsibilities, and commitments proposed to minimize environmental impacts or activities, including monitoring and environmental audits during implementation and decommissioning phases of a project.
Project Affected Person	Means any person experiencing loss of asset, access to income whether of a temporary or permanent nature due to the land acquisition process regardless of whether they are physically displaced or relocated or not.
Grant	A grant refers to financial and/or non-financial resources from a grantor (in this case NETFUND) to a grant recipient (grantee) or an implementing partner to undertake a specific activity of common interest.
Self -identification	The right of individuals and communities to define and assert their ethnic, cultural, or linguistic identity without external imposition or interference
Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)	A principle that recognizes the right of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) to make decisions about activities, projects, policies, or interventions that may affect their lands, territories, resources, livelihoods, cultures, or rights.
Indigenous People Planning Framework (IPPF)	A framework prepared when a Project is likely to involve IPs and is used to manage all of the issues that may arise relating to any IP communities residing within any of the subproject sites before project approval.

Indigenous Peoples Action Plan (IPAP)	Includes (a) a framework for continued consultation with those affected IPs during the subproject implementation; (b) measures to provide these IPs with gender sensitive and culturally appropriate benefits; (c) measures to avoid, minimize. Mitigate, offset or compensate for any adverse subproject impacts, and actions to address these impacts on the different groups in the community; (d) culturally appropriate grievance procedures, monitoring and evaluation arrangements; and (e) a budget and time-bound actions for implementing the planned measures.

ACRONYMS

EMCA	Environmental Management and Coordination Act
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
EMCA	Environmental Management and Coordination Act, 1999
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
ESR	Environmental or Social Risks
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
ESSs	Environmental and Social Standards
ESSP	Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
NETFUND	National Environment Trust Fund
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment

1 Overview of NETFUND

The National Environment Trust Fund (NETFUND) is a State Corporation under the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry mandated to mobilize, manage, and avail resources for environmental management in Kenya. Under Section 24 of the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA), NETFUND is legally established and mandated to receive financial resources in the form of donations, endowments, grants, and gifts from legitimate sources.

Vision: NETFUND is committed to a vision of Sustainable financing for environmental governance and sustainable development in Kenya.

Mission: To mobilize, manage, and avail resources for sustainable environmental conservation and management initiatives.

Core Values:

- i. Accountability: Responsibility for our actions, good governance, professionalism
- ii. Respect: Diversity, rule of law, esteem to each other
- iii. Transparency: openness, trustworthiness, prudence, honesty

To fulfill its mandate, NETFUND supports environmental research and publications, capacity building, environmental awards, and scholarships. NETFUND also provides grants to initiatives that contribute to ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, the circular and blue economy, promotion of nature-based solutions, and climate change mitigation and adaptation actions.

2 Rationale for Indigenous Peoples Policy

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) have emerged as a distinct group due to their place and role as custodians of forests, water sources, and other critical ecosystems. Furthermore, IPLCs significantly contribute to biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and climate change action through their invaluable knowledge, unique perspectives, and close relationship with nature.

However, IPLCs continue to face systemic and socio-economic challenges despite progress made toward inclusive governance. These challenges include limited recognition of their land and resource rights, limited access to basic services, and limited participation in decision-making processes that affect their communities. Furthermore, rapid urbanization, resource exploitation, climate change, and development projects continue to threaten their traditional livelihoods, cultural heritage, and overall well-being.

IPLCs groups are often the first victims of conservation and development activities, and are confronted with issues related to land grabbing, forced displacement, evictions, and dispossession. Cultural stigmatization and economic exclusion against these people continue to further contribute to their marginalization.

NETFUND, being an important player in environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, and climate change action, is cognizant of the significance of IPLCs. NETFUND, therefore, deliberately intends to ensure that all NETFUND operations, programmes, and initiatives respect their rights, dignity, cultures, knowledge systems, and livelihoods, while advancing social cohesion and sustainable development outcomes.

This NETFUND Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Policy has been developed to ensure that Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and local communities are actively engaged in decision-making processes, as well as the design and implementation of environmental initiatives spearheaded by NETFUND in line with international and national frameworks.

Furthermore, this policy complements the Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy of the National Environment Trust Fund (NETFUND), which seeks to ensure that NETFUND supports and implements environmentally sound projects and programmes that address relevant environmental and social risks while safeguarding the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

3 Policy Goal, Purpose, and Objectives

3.1 Policy Goal

To empower Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and protect their rights across all NETFUND operations, programmes, and initiatives.

3.2 Purpose

This NETFUND Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Policy provides a comprehensive framework to guide the Fund's engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities. It seeks to ensure their active participation, promote equitable access to resources, and the integration of traditional knowledge into environmental initiatives spearheaded by NETFUND and its stakeholders. This leads to ownership of conservation and development initiatives, which is vital for sustainable development.

3.3 Objectives

The objectives of this policy:

- To protect and uphold the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in accordance with national and international legal frameworks

- To ensure meaningful, inclusive, and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of NETFUND programmes and projects.
- To ensure that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities have equitable access to project and programme benefits.
- To enhance harmonious and cooperative relations with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.
- To identify, prevent, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts of projects and programmes on Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, ensuring culturally appropriate safeguards and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

3.4 Scope of application

This Policy will apply to all NETFUND operations, programmes, and initiatives and will guide NETFUND officers, implementing partners, and other stakeholders in relation to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

4 Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

This Policy aligns with the following legal and regulatory frameworks guiding the engagement of Indigenous people and local communities: -

4.1 The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP):

This international resolution recognizes the rights of Indigenous Peoples across a wide range of issues and provides a global framework to guide States and the international community in addressing Indigenous Peoples' concerns. The declaration recognizes that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures, and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment. The declaration requires that states promote, respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration.

4.2 UN Guiding Principles on Environment and Human Rights

The principles are grounded in recognition of States' existing obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights and fundamental freedoms.

4.3 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Recognizes that inherent dignity, equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family are the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. It provides fundamental rights such as equality and non-discrimination, and the right to participate in cultural life. These provisions are relevant to Indigenous Peoples and local communities in safeguarding their identity, culture and livelihoods. The declaration calls upon member states to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and freedoms

4.4 Agenda 21 and Rio Declaration (UN Conference on Environment and Development)

Recognize Indigenous Peoples as a major *group* and emphasize that efforts to achieve sustainable development should recognize, accommodate, promote, and strengthen the role of Indigenous Peoples. Agenda 21 calls on states to recognize and strengthen the role of indigenous Peoples and their communities and to protect their knowledge, innovations and practices.

4.5 UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

The Framework calls for the protection of indigenous traditional knowledge, technologies, and practices. The Convention states that affected country parties shall promote the participation of local populations in efforts to combat desertification.

4.6 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

Establishes the universal rights to cultural identity, diversity, and pluralism, recognizing cultural diversity as a common heritage of humanity. It affirms that all persons have the right to participate in cultural life and express their cultural identity.

4.7 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement

Acknowledges that climate change is a common concern of humankind and calls on States, in their climate action efforts, to respect, promote, and consider the rights of Indigenous Peoples, while upholding obligations related to the right to development, gender equality and equity, the empowerment of women, and intergenerational equity.

4.8 The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)

Calls on states to respect, preserve and maintain the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval of knowledge holders and to encourage equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of such knowledge.

4.9 The Constitution of Kenya, 2010

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 provides a strong institutional foundation for protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minorities, and other vulnerable groups, through;

Article 27 which guarantees equality and freedom from discrimination, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minorities, and marginalized communities are treated fairly and without bias.

Article 43 which affirms their economic, social, and cultural rights, including access to healthcare, education, and a clean and healthy environment.

Article 56 which addresses the protection and empowerment of minorities and marginalized groups, requiring the State to implement *affirmative measures* to ensure their inclusion, participation, and development.

Article 11 which acknowledges Indigenous knowledge, languages, cultural innovations, and traditional practices as the nation's foundation and mandates the promotion and safeguarding of Indigenous heritage in all policy and development planning.

Article 63(2)(d)(ii), which recognizes ancestral lands and lands traditionally occupied by hunter-gatherer communities as communal land

Article 69 which encourages *public participation* in management, protection and conservation of the environment.

Article 2(6) which affirms that international treaties ratified by Kenya, including those protecting the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities, form part of Kenyan law.

4.10 The National Policy on Ethnic Minorities, Indigenous, and Marginalized Communities, 2025

This Policy provides a robust national framework to promote the inclusion, recognition, empowerment and meaningful participation of ethnic minorities, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalized communities in governance and development. It emphasizes on the use of affirmative action, targeted resource allocation, and community-led solutions to alleviate structural barriers facing Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minorities and marginalized communities. It encourages the use of Kenya's devolved governance system to empower county governments in delivering culturally responsive services, advance equity, safeguard cultural heritage, ensure meaningful participation in governance and development, and establish mechanisms for grievance redress.

4.11 The Environmental Management and Coordination Act, 1999 (EMCA)

This Act encourages the adoption of special measures to respect, preserve, and maintain the knowledge, innovations, and practices of Indigenous and local communities that embody traditional lifestyles relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. It further encourages the wider application of indigenous knowledge with the approval and involvement of its holders i.e. Indigenous people and local communities.

For projects likely to have significant environmental impacts and those seeking to operate within areas occupied by Indigenous People, EMCA requires an Environmental Impact Assessment and the obtaining of the requisite licenses.

The Environmental Management and Co-ordination (Access to Biological Resources and Benefit Sharing) Regulations, 2025 (Legal Notice No. 68/2025) further provides a structured framework for equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of Kenya's biological resources, ensuring that indigenous peoples and local communities are compensated, and supports the protection of the intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in relation to biological diversity.

4.12 Community Land Act, 2016

The Act provides a legal framework for recognizing, registering, and protecting the customary land rights of Indigenous communities and pastoralists. It allows communal and ancestral lands to be formally registered as community titles, enabling collective management, safeguarding them from unlawful privatization, and ensuring that women and youth have meaningful participation in land management committees.

4.13 The Access to Information Act, 2016

The Act sets out the conditions under which government organs and agencies are obligated to provide information; proactively publish information in the public interest that is in their possession; outline the procedures for making and processing requests for information; and define the parameters for non-disclosure. The Act further stipulates that Indigenous Peoples are to be furnished with information relating to any dealings by the National and County Governments, as well as other state agencies, concerning their land and resources.

5 Guiding Principles

NETFUND shall consider the following principles:

1. Self-Identification

Identity is central to Indigenous Peoples, as their livelihood security, well-being, and dignity are distinct and closely tied to the continuation of their traditions and the preservation of their ancestral lands and territories. This policy will ensure that Indigenous Peoples define and assert their own identity, free from external interference, based on historical continuity, cultural distinctiveness, and attachment to ancestral lands.

2. Self-determination

Self-determination is an ongoing process of ensuring that indigenous peoples make decisions about matters that affect their lives. This policy acknowledges and respects the autonomy of Indigenous Peoples in governing their internal affairs and participating meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives and communities, as a distinct identity within mainstream society.

3. Collective Attachment

This Policy shall recognize and protect Indigenous Peoples' distinct histories, languages, and cultural identities; geographically distinct habitats; ancestral territories, whether areas of seasonal use or permanent occupation; the natural resources within them; and their collective attachment to these areas.

4. Cultural Appropriateness

This policy shall not subject Indigenous Peoples to forced assimilation or the destruction of their culture, and will ensure that they maintain, control, protect, and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions, which are essential for their survival, well-being, and holistic development as distinct human groups.

Further, this policy shall enable Indigenous Peoples to practice, preserve, and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs; transmit their cultural values and knowledge systems to future generations; and seek the repatriation of human remains.

5. Free, prior and informed consent

This policy assures Indigenous Peoples the opportunity to give or withhold consent for projects affecting their lands, resources, or livelihoods. It further guarantees meaningful participation, prevents coercion, and requires that consultations with IPLCs occur before project approval and with full access to relevant information.

6. Participation and inclusion

This policy will ensure that Indigenous Peoples fully and effectively participate at every stage of any action that may affect them, free from coercion, intimidation, or manipulation. This requires that Indigenous Peoples be recognized and engaged as legitimate and competent stakeholders in all NETFUND operations, programmes, and initiatives that affect their lives, lands, and livelihoods.

7. Equality and non-discrimination

This policy will ensure that Indigenous Peoples enjoy equal human rights and freedom, free from discrimination in exercising their rights, particularly based on their origin or identity.

8. Equity and Social Justice:

This policy will ensure that Indigenous Peoples have access to fair and just distribution of opportunities, resources, rewards and services.

6 Policy Statement

NETFUND is committed to upholding and promoting the rights, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous Peoples. In light of this, NETFUND will therefore:

1. Promote the full, effective, and inclusive participation of Indigenous Peoples in all Projects/programmes financed, implemented or supported by the Fund
2. Respect, protect and uphold the highest standards of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms when engaging with IPLCs
3. Recognize and protect the customary rights and collective attachment to their lands, territories, cultural heritage and natural resources.
4. Respect, protect and uphold Indigenous Peoples' right to define and assert their own identity and status; and their right to pursue their own social, economic, and cultural development without external interference.
5. Recognize, protect and integrate Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge, innovations and practices related to environmental management and sustainable resource use.
6. Ensure that Indigenous Peoples have equitable access to opportunities, resources and benefits arising from NETFUND-supported projects/programmes
7. Promote collaboration and partnerships with Indigenous Peoples to enhance inclusive environmental governance and sustainable development.
8. Prioritize the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) when engaging with Indigenous Peoples
9. Ensure open and transparent communication, access to information, and accessible grievance redress mechanisms for Indigenous Peoples in all NETFUND-supported initiatives.

7 Policy Application

This policy shall be applied in the following areas:

7.1 Project Management

NETFUND will ensure that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities who are targeted or affected by NETFUND-supported projects are meaningfully and continuously engaged throughout all stages of the project cycle.

7.1.1 Programming

NETFUND will undertake a *comprehensive situational analysis* of the environmental sector, recognizing and documenting issues affecting Indigenous Peoples at global, regional, and local levels. This analysis will inform the identification of interventions targeting Indigenous Peoples and alignment with national and sectoral strategic directions and focus areas.

7.1.2 Project Identification

At this stage, NETFUND will undertake stakeholder mapping to identify and engage relevant stakeholders targeted by the project, including indigenous peoples and local communities.

NETFUND will thereafter actively engage targeted Indigenous Peoples in identifying the actual challenges, development constraints, and opportunities affecting their communities, as well as analyzing their root causes, and associated impacts. The IPLCs shall define their priority needs in relation to the proposed project.

This will be undertaken through community consultations, focus group discussions, and engagement with community leaders and representative institutions with the aim of generating trust with the communities, their organizations and government institutions.

NETFUND may seek and facilitate opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to contribute to the development of project concept notes or proposals.

7.1.3 Project Formulation

At this stage, NETFUND shall seek Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) from the Targeted IPLCs. Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) shall be established through a process of good faith negotiations between NETFUND and IPLCs.

NETFUND shall share information on the project, including its environmental, social, and cultural impacts, as well as the measures for managing these impacts. NETFUND shall also ensure that timely and accurate information about the project is provided in a language that is easily understandable to them to support informed decision-making.

The decision on whether the project should go ahead entirely lies with the IPLCs.

Therefore, if consent is not obtained, NETFUND will explore viable alternative project designs in consultation and with the participation of indigenous peoples and other experts.

If consent is obtained, NETFUND shall undertake further consultative engagements with the targeted IPLCs to obtain their perspectives and deeper understanding of the project problem, context, and proposed interventions, as well as suggest recommendations for project design and implementation. Consultative engagement forms intended for information sharing shall consider special time factors for IPLCs.

The targeted IPLCs intent or commitment to proceed with the project should be confirmed through signed resolutions or minutes in line with the established decision-making thresholds, documentation of key agreed terms, and evidence of adequate outreach and consultation to ensure consensus-building through the established community structures.

The targeted IPLCs will be involved in:

1. co-analyzing the challenges they may face in their traditional livelihoods resulting from the proposed project;
2. Co-designing the project goal, objectives, theory of change/Logframe, proposed activities, budget and implementation mechanism;
3. Assessing the project proposal against their interest and provide recommendations to improve project design;
4. Participate in environmental and social screening to categorize the project based on potential risks, including undertaking environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA), Gender analysis, social assessment and baseline surveys.
5. Analyzing the potential risks and identifying opportunities to minimize risks; integrate Indigenous knowledge systems
6. Where needed, include capacity-building measures to enable indigenous peoples' organizations to assume effective control over the resources to be invested in their communities.
7. Defining their roles and responsibilities in the project;
8. Define benefit-sharing arrangements
9. Provide input on the FPIC process and development of the Indigenous People Planning Framework (IPPF) or Indigenous Peoples Action Plan (IPAP) and consent agreements.
10. Provide input on the grievance and redress mechanism for the project.

To ensure project success, NETFUND shall strengthen the capacity of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to effectively implement, monitor, and evaluate project activities.

7.1.4 Project implementation

During project implementation, NETFUND will

1. Continue to engage with the indigenous peoples through information disclosure, meaningful consultation, and informed participation
2. Guarantee translation and interpretation of project information into the respective indigenous peoples' language to enable access to information.
3. Adopt a “rights-based approach” and apply the “do no harm” principle to safeguard the rights of indigenous people during project implementation.
4. Prioritize IPLCs for project-related employment, contracts, and economic opportunities to ensure equitable participation and benefits.

5. Prioritize the active participation of Indigenous women and youth to enhance inclusivity and promote meaningful and sustainable outcomes, in line with the **NETFUND Gender Policy**.
6. Ensure that implemented/supported projects affecting or targeting IPLCs will meet the Environmental and Social Standards stipulated in the **NETFUND Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy**
7. Establish Grievance-handling mechanisms for all implemented/supported projects and programmes affecting IPLCs. Grievances shall be handled according to the **NETFUND's Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)**.
8. Apply affirmative action in allocating project grants to Indigenous Peoples, in accordance with the **NETFUND Project Development and Grant Management Manual**.

7.1.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring implementation of projects affecting or targeting IP's will be undertaken in accordance with the **NETFUND Monitoring and Evaluation Policy**.

Indicators related to IPLCs will be captured in NETFUND's Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks and Plans.

Monitoring and evaluation activities will ensure:

1. Assessment of compliance with the project objectives and procedures outlined in the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) or Indigenous Peoples Action Plan (IPAP).
2. Monitoring and evaluation of environmental and social performance, particularly regarding impacts on Indigenous Peoples affected by or targeted by the project.
3. Assessment of consultation processes used, including community-level and individual-level engagements.
4. Evaluation of access to mitigation measures by affected communities to ensure that risks and adverse impacts are adequately addressed.
5. Tracking grievances and dispute resolution, including the number, nature, and resolution of complaints raised by Indigenous Peoples.
6. Evaluation of socioeconomic impacts, including effects on income, livelihoods, and standards of living within Indigenous communities.
7. Identification of actions for improvement, to enhance positive project outcomes and further mitigate potential negative impacts.

Using the appropriate form, manner, and language, NETFUND will disclose the monitoring report(s) to all indigenous peoples' communities for feedback as guided by the **NETFUND Information Access Policy and procedures**.

7.1.6 Project Closure

At Project close-out, NETFUND will;

1. Prepare the IPLCs to manage the project site or assets post-closure by enhancing their capacities.
2. Through a structured process, transfer ownership of project infrastructure or rehabilitated land to the IPs.
3. Document and share lessons learned and best practices using the appropriate form, manner, and language for continuity

7.2 Research and Knowledge Management

NETFUND recognizes the vital role of Indigenous knowledge and the need to protect traditional knowledge systems, given their significant contribution to addressing the triple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

With respect to international and local ethical frameworks that respect the autonomy and intellectual contributions of indigenous knowledge holders, NETFUND will;

1. Prioritize resource allocation for collaborative research initiatives that connect Indigenous knowledge holders with scientific and research institutions, thereby promoting co-creation, mutual learning, and enhanced capacities.
2. Using a participatory approach, ensure the active participation of Indigenous communities in the generation and publication of indigenous knowledge and research outputs that are relevant, culturally appropriate, and owned by the IPs.

7.3 Capacity building and technical support services

NETFUND will continuously strive to build the capacities of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) on relevant and emerging issues that promote sustainable development and climate resilience.

8 Roles and Responsibilities

This section defines roles and responsibilities in line with the Fund's hierarchy

8.1 Board of Trustees (BoT)

NETFUND is governed by a Board of Trustees (BOT) as the apex governing body supported by the Chief Executive Officer and NETFUND employees.

The BOT is responsible for:

1. Approving the Indigenous Peoples Policy
2. Allocating adequate resources to implement the Indigenous Peoples Policy
3. Providing oversight on the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Policy

8.2 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

As the head of the fund, the CEO bears the overall responsibility and accountability for implementing this policy. The specific roles and responsibilities include:

1. Facilitating the establishment of structures and systems to support implementation, monitoring, and reporting of this policy
2. Facilitating capacity development of the departments, committees and staff responsible for implementation of the policy
3. Facilitating the review and approval processes of this policy
4. Advise the BOT on issues related to Indigenous Peoples, including appropriate affirmative action and interventions

8.3 Senior Management

Directors and Heads of the various departments shall be responsible for:

1. Ensuring NETFUND's policies, plans, programmes and projects integrate indigenous Peoples
2. Ensuring stakeholders comply with this policy, track and report this progress
3. Ensuring full disclosure of existing and newly developed Plans with concerned stakeholders and regularly review this policy and make necessary amendments.
4. Provide inputs to project reports on the status of implementation with the policy during implementation and any issues arising

8.4 NETFUND Officers

All NETFUND personnel responsible for planning, implementing, managing, and supporting project activities throughout the project cycle shall be responsible for:

1. Design and implement culturally appropriate, community-driven projects integrating Indigenous knowledge
2. Build and maintain trust-based relationships through culturally appropriate approaches and respect for traditional governance systems.
3. Ensure Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes are upheld and that communities actively participate in project design, decision-making, and implementation.
4. Ensure compliance with safeguards, policies, and regulatory requirements
5. Strengthen the capacity of IPLCs to plan, implement, monitor, and sustain project interventions.
6. Support knowledge management, partnerships, and resource mobilization for IPLC-focused initiatives.
7. Monitor, evaluate, and report on project performance, incorporating community feedback.

8.5 Implementing Partners

The fund supports projects through specific stakeholders, including government agencies, community groups and implementing partners whom it requires them to:

1. Comply with the provisions of this policy

2. Provide regular reporting to NETFUND on compliance with this policy, including progress on Indigenous Peoples engagement and any emerging risks or issues.

9 Monitoring, Evaluation, Knowledge Management and Learning

NETFUND will monitor this policy in line with the changing policy environment and emerging issues and evaluate it to determine its effectiveness. The process will focus on assessing how effectively the policy commitments are being implemented and the extent to which they contribute to the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Indigenous Peoples will participate in monitoring and evaluation processes, including setting priorities and validating findings. Public forums and stakeholder validation workshops will be used to collect feedback. Their input will be taken into account in reviewing and improving the policy to ensure it remains responsive to their needs and priorities

Objectives of Monitoring and Evaluation

The objectives of monitoring and evaluation of this policy shall be to:

- Track the implementation of the policy in line with its stated commitments and principles.
- Evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the policy in addressing the needs and priorities of indigenous peoples.
- Identify gaps, challenges, and unintended effects arising from policy implementation.
- Inform policy review, revision, and improvement based on evidence and stakeholder feedback.
- Strengthen accountability of NETFUND to Indigenous Peoples and other stakeholders
- Promote learning and continuous improvement in the application of the policy.

Monitoring

Monitoring will be undertaken on a continuous basis to track the implementation of this policy and ensure that its commitments are upheld in practice. It will involve periodic reviews of progress in integrating Indigenous Peoples' considerations into NETFUND's operations and decision-making processes.

Findings from monitoring will be used to guide adjustments and strengthen the overall implementation of the policy.

Evaluation

The policy shall be subjected to a mid-term evaluation and a final evaluation at the end of the policy period. The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact,

and sustainability of policy interventions. The evaluation process will be participatory, incorporating views from Indigenous Peoples and other stakeholders through validation forums and community consultations.

Reporting and Learning

NETFUND will document and report on the implementation of this policy, including progress, challenges, and lessons learned. Reporting will support transparency and accountability and will inform continuous improvement and future policy revisions.

10 Policy oversight

There shall be periodic reporting of activities related to implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Policy and complaints to the NETFUND Board of Trustees and respective project governance structures. The reporting shall include data on investigation cases in terms of number of cases, types of allegations and summary of the status and actions taken.

11 Review

The Indigenous Peoples Policy will be reviewed every five years or earlier if emerging needs or changes in the legal and policy environment arise. The review will consider evidence from M&E processes, evolving national priorities, stakeholder recommendations, and lessons learned during implementation. Policy revisions shall follow appropriate legal or administrative procedures and be guided by inclusive consultations with Indigenous Peoples and other stakeholders.

12 Authorization of the Policy

The Chief Executive Officer duly recommends the Indigenous Peoples Policy for approval by the NETFUND Board of Trustees and hereby confirms that the policy has been developed consultatively considering the views of all the relevant stakeholders.

Signature:

Date:

Samson Toniok

Chief Executive Officer and Secretary to the Board of Trustees

The NETFUND Board of Trustees hereby approves the Indigenous Peoples Policy to be operative for five (5) years.

Signature:

Date:

Hon Mwaure Waihiga

**Chairperson, Board of
Trustees**

